Nothing New!!!

OR,

LOUISA,

THE

ORPHAN OF LENNOX ABBEY;

A

NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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LETTER I.

Miss Lenox to Mrs. Mordant.

NORTHINGTON CASTLE.

Saturday.

OH! my dear Mrs. Mordant, I have such a fairy tale to tell you, I am afraid you will think I have been making extracts from the Arabian Night's Entertainments; it is all so like enchantment. I was too much fatigued to take a pen in my hand yesterday; besides, as my dear mother had determined upon leaving the castle to-day,

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I was so occupied in attending to her, that I found time for nothing else; I do not know how it is, but I parted with her very reluctantly, and should have been happier could I have prevailed on her to let me accompany her home, than I can be pleased with any amusements reserved for me here. However, she would not hearken to the least objection, on my part, to her determination of leaving me behind; it would be hard indeed, my love, said she, if your youthful enjoyments were to be abridged to indulge my infirmities, when there is no occasion whatever for their clashing; so if you mean me to be easy, make yourself so, and remember what your favourite Pope says, "To enjoy is to obey." You know my dear mother's kind way of being positive, and how sweetly determined she looks, when she thinks she is forcing any body to

be

be happy against their will; therefore, you will not be surprised that I said no more, but acquiesced in what the good lady commanded. About nine o'clock this morning Mrs. Lenox quitted the castle, accompanied by Mrs. Parker, for I would not let her be left with me, as my mother meant to do, but I took my turn to be positive, and assured her, that I would make no use of Mrs. Parker, if she staid with me; and so my dear Madam, said I, you will inconvenience yourself without benefiting me, therefore pray let me have my own way this once. She called me saucy puss, but accepted the offer, which gave me great satisfaction, for I know Mrs. P. will be as attentive to her mistress, as I could be, and watch her looks to anticipate her very wishes. Mrs. Lenox desired me to give her love to you, my dear Madam, and ask you when

you mean to favour us with your company; the time for which you returned home expired a fortnight ago, and she thinks you want a gentle hint, to remind you of your promise. I suppose, added she with a sweet smile, you will be scribbling an account of the wonderful masquerade, to your friend and confidant at the Priory. And so to be sure I shall, for she is so indulgent, as to be pleased, or seem pleased, with all the nonsense I send her; so now for it. We dined early, that is to say, at five o'clock, on Thursday, and as soon as we had drank our coffee, we retired to dress for the masquerade, which, as I believe I told you before, was to be *al Fresco;* the evening was delightfully fine, rather inclined to heat, and perfectly favourable to an out-door entertainment. The Duchess, who loves surprise, made it her particular request, that nobody

nobody would visit that part of the pleasure grounds, where the pavillion for dancing was erected, till the illumination was complete; in order, she said, that the *coup d'œil* might be the more impressive; and indeed I think her grace was perfectly right, as it had a most astonishing effect on every beholder; for as we had not seen the least preparation, it appeared to have been raised on the spot by the word of the enchanter. The pavillion was erected on a beautiful lawn, to which you are conducted through an avenue of poplars, whose delicate foliage, trembling with the light breeze, gave additional beauty to the brilliant lamps that hung in festoons between every tree; on the lawn was distributed in clumps, the most beautiful aromatic, and flowring shrubs, enclosed in bracket work, the edges of which were adorned with small lamps, to

imitate gems, which produced a most lively effect, the flowers shewing to such advantage by the lights that surrounded them; in a thicket, that bounded the lawn on the further side, was placed a band of wind instruments, which pouring their sweet strains in the still ear of night, filled every listener with delight; on a raised ground in the centre of the lawn, was placed the pavillion, to whose beauties I fear I shall not be able to do justice; however, you must be so kind as to accept my best endeavours. It was an immense long building, every way proportionate, with a lofty dome, and painted to imitate marble, so exactly, that it was difficult to detect the imposition; it was surrounded by a colonnade of transparent pillars, that looked like the finest amber, with corinthian capitals of silver,

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and the lamps, hanging in festoons, with silver chains from pillar to pillar; the dome was ornamented with lamps, fixed like the setting of gems, and to represent topaz, two rows round the top, and the same number at bottom; and the top of the colonnade corresponded with the dome. You ascended six steps, of the most beautiful white marble to the pavillion, that were really what they appeared to be, and are part of a banquetting house, the Duchess intends having built on the same spot; when we entered the ball room, I believe every body was as much struck as myself, with the most unexpected, and beautiful scene, I ever beheld; the whole place appeared like a palace of diamonds or crystals, and really its brilliancy quite dazzled the eyes; the room contained twenty-eight pillars, fourteen on each side, of the same

form as those in the colonnades, but apparently of the clearest crystal, for they were so contrived, as to contain the light within, the outsides being formed of cut glass; every ornament in the room was of the same materials, i. e. cut glass, with lights so fixed, as to create the most brilliant illumination, without the appearance of a single lamp, or candle, to relieve the eye from the dazzling lustre around. Branches, and wreaths of laurel intermixt with roses, both red and white, were tastefully distributed, in different parts of the room, and the wreaths hung in elegant festoons between every pillar; in niches made for the purpose all round the room, were placed orange, and rose trees, in full bloom, and the tubs that held them, were so artfully concealed, that they appeared as if they sprang out of the walls of this enchanted palace, and delighted

every

every sense with their fragrance and their beauty; the inside of the dome appeared one blaze of diamonds, for the lights on the outside were artfully so contrived, as to illuminate the interior, which being entirely of glass, cut with the most exquisite skill, formed a spectacle as astonishing as it was brilliant; the floor was painted to imitate mosaic pavement, but was so elastic, that the most awkward dancer might easily "trip it on the light fantastic toe;" the ceiling was of pale azure blue, and the seats round the room, were painted to represent fine green turf, and corresponded very properly with the laurel, which, as I said before, was every where intermixt with the crystal, of which the walls appeared to be composed. The Duchess was highly gratified with the expression of rapture, that burst from every mouth as we entered the saloon; and in-

 deed

deed it was but common justice to say, that every thing was designed, and executed with the most exquisite taste. At the end of the ball room, was a room for refreshments of every kind, and adjoining, another for cards; but the construction, and ornaments of both were simple in the extreme, though elegance was united with plainness, and this contrast was wisely intended to heighten the effect, and brilliancy, of the ball-room. A word or two, about the supper-room, and then I have done with descriptions; this was another pavillion, erected for the purpose within the thicket, where the band of wind instruments were placed, and nearer the castle, for the convenience of the cooks; this was quite in a different style from the other, but nevertheless extremely grand; it was entirely ornamented by transparent paintings, representing the most interesting scenes from

from different fables of Dryden, particularly that of the Flower and the Leaf, with which, being a favourite subject, the painter took more pains than with any of the rest; these paintings, executed in a masterly style, had a most pleasing effect; and who do you think was the artist? no other than the ingenious Lady Caroline herself. The light given by the transparencies not being enough for the room, three elegantly cut glass lustres were suspended by wreaths of artificial flowers, from the roof; all the tables were adorned with golden candlesticks, three branches to each candlestick, and all the ornaments of the frames, deserts, &c. &c. were done under Lady Caroline's direction, some by her own hands; she has great taste, and ingenuity, in these sort of things; as to what covered

the table, I shall only say, that there was every thing, luxury could invent, or expence purchase, and the supper was thought by the disciples of Epicurus, to be a *chef d'œuvre* of culinary abilities; for my part, the simplest dish being always my choice, I have little judgment of the merits of that part of the entertainment.

And now, my dear Mrs. Mordant, after all this expence, and trouble, do not you think the founders of the feast were entitled to a large portion of the pleasure lavished on the guests; but, alas, such is the fate of poor mortality, it generally turns out, that some trivial occurrence intervenes to spoil the enjoyment of these long projected schemes of felicity so fondly expected, so much built upon, by the designers. The truth of this is fully proved in the present instance,

instance, for I am sure both the Duchess and her daughter experienced more mortification than pleasure, after the first hour or two of the entertainment; as to the Duke, he is one of those passive beings, that nothing ever affects him deeply, therefore if he has less pleasure than other people, he has infinitely less pain also; and I dare say, if the Duchess had not answered every thing he said to her with asperity, the good gentleman would never have perceived that any thing went amiss; and even when he was convinced of the Duchess's displeasure, he appeared quite at a loss to account for the cause of it, though every other person concerned had been acquainted with it from its beginning. I will tell you, my dear Madam, how it all happened, at least as far as was known, for there was at last a mystery, which

which nobody could penetrate. I told you how Lady Caroline's party was to be dressed, and that Lord Ormond was to be a Laurel Knight, and Lady C.'s partner; Sir H. P. danced with me, and Lord Henry Pemberton with the eldest Miss Sydney; Lord Henry is the Marquis of Barford's second son, and a most passionate adorer of Lady C.; his Lordship is jealous of the preference shewn Lord Ormond by the Duchess and Lady C. and not a little picqued at not dancing with her ladyship. After the first dance was over, as Lady Caroline, Miss Sydney, Miss Foster, Lady Emily Osborn, and myself, were standing in a groupe, observing the other masks, and Lord Ormond close by Lady Caroline's side, a fortuneteller came up to us, and entreated Lady C. to shew her her hand; Lady C. laughing, complied with

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the request, and drawing off her glove presented her palm to the gipsy. Ah! my pretty lady, said the sibyl, here is a delicate hand, and yet it is full of crosses; alas! alas! I am afraid you will be disappointed in love—and rivalled in your affections by your sister. Lady C. told her, with a smile, she was no witch, and therefore in little danger of burning; if, added she, I have no rival to fear but a sister, I need never mix jealousy with my love. The fortuneteller shook her head in silence, and turned to Lord Ormond; come, said she, Sir, let me tell your fortune; you are an impostor, I fancy, said Lord O. and know nothing of your trade; however, here is my hand, let us hear what you have to say. The seeming gipsey, took his hand, and pretending to examine it with earnestness, she exclaimed, take care young man, lest in pursuing

suing a shadow, you lose the substance. Happiness awaits you, seek her out, you must be blind as the burrowing mole, if you do not discover her; as she said these words, I saw her put a slip of paper into Lord Ormond's hand, and immediately disappeared in the crowd. Lord O. presently after left our party, and I saw him at a distance, reading the paper he had just received. Lady Caroline took hold of my arm, and we walked up and down the saloon; at last, Lady C. said, I wish I knew who that fortuneteller is; somebody that does not know your ladyship, replied I, for she said you had a sister, and you have none. Ah! my dear Louisa, replied Lady C. you are mistaken, I have a sister—but she is in such a deplorable state, as not to endanger my peace as a rival; another time I will tell you all the particulars of this melancholy affair;

affair; I am afraid of being overheard now. I was all astonishment, for I never had heard that any such person existed; but before I had time to reply, the Duchess came up to us, and asked Lady Caroline, if she was not going to dance again. Lady C. replied, yes, when the party are assembled. They are all waiting for you, replied the Duchess, except Lord Ormond, who is not to be found; I thought his Lordship was with you. Oh no, said Lady C. I have seen nothing of Lord O. since the fortuneteller engaged his attention. I cannot imagine, said the Duchess, who that fortuneteller is, she seems to know every body, and yet nobody has been able to find out who she is. She told me, I should be rivalled by my sister, said Lady Caroline, colouring as she spoke, for the heat of the room had made her take off her mask; the Duchess wore none all the evening, and the

deadly

deadly paleness that overspread her features, as Lady Caroline pronounced the word sister, convinced me there was a painful meaning conveyed in it; however, she instantly recovered herself, and said, with seeming indifference, that you know, my dear, is impossible, and is a proof that though so conversant with other people's affairs, she did not know your's. We all walked together to the part of the saloon where the quadrelle dancers were waiting for us. Lord Ormond is still missing, said the Duchess, I wonder where he can be. Oh! I can tell you, said the loquacious Miss Egerton, who just then came up to us, I saw him just now on his knees to a beautiful nun, in one of the bye walks, who had taken off her mask, to captivate him with the sweetest face I ever beheld in my life; she hurried it on again the moment she perceived me near them,

them, but I had caught a glance sufficient to convince me she was a beauty. It is very odd I do not know her; she cannot be a person of fashion, for I know every body here, that is of any consequence, I am sure. Some country parson's daughter, I dare say, for they are generally very pretty, and very poor. Be she who she will, she has rivaled you, sweet lady, addressing Lady Caroline; I do not wonder his Lordship forgets the dance, while engaged with so lovely a companion.—I am surprised, replied Lady C. haughtily, you should suppose, Miss Egerton, that Lord Ormond's engagements are any thing to me. Well, I vow, said Miss E. that is very pretty now, and you act the surprise very well; why does not every body know, that there is a match making up between Lord Ormond and you, and does not every body say, that you like it extremely,

tremely, and every body talks of my aunt's partiality; and—every body is very impertinent, interrupted the Duchess, and I desire for the future, Selina, that you will forbear to repeat what every body says. Oh! your grace know I love talking too well, to submit to silence, except by way of penance, and I have not done any thing to deserve that, unless indeed, I am to be punished for vexing my cousin Caroline, and making her jealous, replied the giddy Selina; besides, the penance would suit the pretty nun better, added she, and if I can find her Lady Abbess among this motly crew, I will take care she shall fast, and pray, for these seven years, for running away with poor Caroline's lover. As soon as she had said this, she left us, and Lord Ormond came up, and apologized to Lady Caroline, for having kept her waiting; she

replied

replied only by an inclination of her head; but the Duchess seemed highly offended, and said, it was not consistent with the politeness natural to his Lordship, to keep a whole company from their amusement so long. I am too sensible, said Lord Ormond, bowing graciously, how culpable I must appear, to presume to offer the least palliation of my conduct; I throw myself entirely on the mercy of those I have offended. Every body received this apology graciously, except Lord Henry, who said, with a sarcastic air, your Lordship should have brought the pretty nun to plead for you. I would rather abide by the consequences of my misconduct, replied Lord Ormond, haughtily, than give any pretty lady the trouble of pleading in my behalf, particularly to one so inexorable as your Lordship. Our difference, replied Lord Henry, may be settled

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at a more convenient season, without the interference of any one. I think any season more suitable than the present, said Lord Ormond, coolly, and shall always be ready to give your Lordship all the attention the subject may require; if you please we will now proceed with the dance.

You will readily imagine, my dear Mrs. Mordant, how chearful we all felt after such a conversation had passed before us, for nobody entertained a doubt, but that a duel would be the consequence, as Lord Henry is of a most passionate haughty temper, irritable, and vindictive to the greatest degree, and most cordially hates Lord Ormond, because he supposes Lady Caroline's coldness to him proceeds from a partiality to Lord Ormond. However, we were obliged to smother our apprehensions, and proceed with

with our dancing, and never sure, was such a jumble of mistakes ever seen; not a creature could recollect the figure for two minutes together. After we had blundered to the end of it, Lady Caroline declared the heat was too much for her, and she must decline dancing any more that evening; a determination very agreeable to the whole set, and some separated into parties, and strolled about till supper time, some times in the gardens, for the heat of the weather made them more agreeable than the ball-room. Lady Caroline and I were walking together, in a charming walk near the supper pavillion, when Miss Egerton joined us. Oh! said she, Caroline, I am *au desespoir*, for the mischief I fear I have done; indeed I intended no harm, and little thought my *etourderie* would have produced any ill consequences. Has any thing excited this

alarm

alarm lately? said Lady C. anxiously. Oh, yes, replied Miss E. Sir Henry Paget has just been scolding me so, you cannot imagine, and says, there will be a duel between Lord Ormond, and Lord Henry; and that the tale I told about the pretty nun is the cause of their quarrel; and yet how can that be? sure Lord Henry is not in love with the pretty nun, as well as with you, and jealous too of Lord O. whether he slights, or notices you. I think you are the most ridiculous creature, Selina, with your jealousies, that ever existed, replied Lady Caroline; your brain is always busy about love stories; the least civility, is a declaration of love; the least slight, is jealousy; do you judge for yourself in this manner; I dare say the whole was your own fabrication. No, no, cousin Cary, said Miss E. what I said was true enough; and look there, continued she, pointing

pointing to two masks that were walking across the top of the alley we were in, there is Lord O. and his Cara, arm in arm, passing before us. Why do you tremble so, Caroline, you know Lord O. and his engagements, are nothing to you? and I dare say he is only shewing you what you have to expect, when you are married. We now drew near enough to perceive, that it really was Lord Ormond, with a lady in the habit of a white nun, holding his arm. Lord O. bowed as he passed, but they glided so quickly by, that I could only catch a glimpse of a most elegant form, without being able to guess who it could be; she appeared tall, and extremely graceful. Lady Caroline stopped involuntarily, and following them with her eyes, a deep sigh escaped her. Who can that be, exclaimed she, not observing Miss Egerton, who stood tittering at

this unguarded avowal of the interest she took in the very person's affairs she had just been disavowing all regard for. I am glad to see you so indifferent, Caroline, said Miss Egerton, archly, and I am sure Lord Henry would have been in raptures, to have heard that deep sigh. I did not think you was so cruel, Selina, said Lady Caroline, bursting into tears; you seem to delight in tormenting me. Forgive me, my dear lady, said Miss Egerton, affectionately taking Lady C.'s hand; but indeed it is your own fault; had you been more sincere, I should have been less culpable; giddy as I am, I would not give pain to any one, much more to you, whom I love so well; say you forgive me, or I shall be wretched. I do, most sincerely—but pray say no more on the subject, for here is Sir Henry Paget coming to us. Where is the Lady of the Leaf, said he, advancing

advancing towards us, and bowing gracefully to Lady Caroline, repeated,

The sovereign lady of our land is she,
Diana called—the queen of chastity.

I have been looking every where, added he, for your ladyship; a song in praise of the laurel ever young, is just going to be sung in the saloon, and your ladyship's presence is indispensable.

I will attend you immediately, Sir, replied Lady Caroline; but pray, Sir Henry, is there any truth in the report, that——I mean is there any danger of a——bless me Louisa, I wonder you have no curiosity to enquire about what Miss Egerton has just been telling us. Dear me, said Miss Egerton, all these circumlocutions to ask the simple ques-

tion, whether there is any probability that the misunderstanding between Lord Ormond and Lord Harry will end in a duel. I entreat your ladyship not to be the least alarmed on that subject; I am sure Lord Ormond has too much coolness, and self-command, to involve himself in so criminal an engagement; his notions of duelling are quite different from those in general adopted by the *beau monde;* what I said to Miss Egerton, just now, was only to frighten her. You are a frightful creature, said Miss Egerton, and ought to be avoided as a bug-bear; you have spoiled my pleasure for these two hours. We saw your friend pass by with the pretty nun, not five minutes ago, and I am dying to know who she is. Your curiosity will be satisfied at supper, Madam, said Sir Henry smiling, if you can prolong your existence till then. Then offering

Lady

Lady Caroline one arm, and me the other, we walked to the saloon, where we heard the enclosed song, most enchantingly sung by some capital performers from London, that the Duchess had procured to give additional charms to this magnificent, and expensive entertainment.

Hail! ever youthful tree, all hail!
Whose verdant beauties never fail,
Though winter howls around:
To Albion art thou justly dear,
For see her gallant sons appear,
With laurel trophies crown'd.

Our voices let us gladly raise,
To sing the hero's well earned praise,
And thine unrivall'd tree!
Bright emblem of the worth you crown,
Deathless thy leaf and their renown,
Unfading both shall be!

While we were listening with delight to the soft notes of the enchanting B——n, Lord Ormond entered the saloon with the nun still holding his arm, the fortuneteller following; as they drew near our party, I could perceive astonishment, and displeasure, strongly pictured in the Duchess's features. Lord Ormond came up to Lady Caroline, and bowing respectfully, said, will your ladyship permit me to to introduce to your notice, a lady worthy of the high honour of Lady Caroline Egerton's esteem; can I pass a greater encomium on either, than by saying that they are kindred souls. The compliment is doubtful, my Lord, said the Duchess, while one party remains behind a cloud. When that cloud is removed, said Lord Ormond, how many eyes will be dazzled, that are now

now unconscious of the concealed brightness; in the mean time, continued he, will your ladyship permit the honour I requested, turning to Lady Caroline. Her ladyship bowed without speaking; Lord Ormond then taking the nun's hand, put it into Lady Caroline's—sweet sister excellence, said he, be ever thus united; may no rude hand have power to break the happy union! Your lordship has been contemplating the concealed brightness you talk of, said the Duchess, till your eyes are dazzled, and all your senses turned to rhapsody; we shall expect an elucidation of this mistery at supper; mine is not a subscription masquerade, and the guests that are unknown, are also unwelcome. Come Caroline, taking Lady Caroline's hand, I want your opinion of a little arrangement in the supper room; so saying, they both left us, and as I was not

included in the invitation to follow the Duchess, I remained with Miss Egerton, who said, turning to me, it is very odd I have not been able to find out Evelyn to-night, it is very strange she has not attempted to join us. We may have seen her without knowing her, replied I, for she seemed to have a pleasure in not being known, when our dresses were first talked of. Pretty lady, said the fortuneteller, addressing Miss Egerton, pray let me tell your fortune; cross my hand with a bit of silver, and you shall hear the wonderful joys that are in store for you. Well, I vow, said the giddy girl, I have a great mind to hear what you will find to say to me, though to be sure, you know nothing more than I do. Try her, fair lady, said Lord Ormond, she has revealed such wonders to me, that I believe she is too conversant with the black art, for

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the good of her soul. Well, now for your wonders, madam gipsey, said Miss Egerton, putting half a crown into her hand and displaying her own palm at the same time. You will have three husbands, sweet mistress, said the fortuneteller, and bury them all; *quel supplice*, exclaimed Miss Egerton, I hope they will make haste and die, that I may have time to enjoy my liberty, when they are at rest; but pray, what sort of men will they be, for I am dying to know. Taciturnity, self-sufficiency, and affectation, will characterise the first. Then I am sure that must be you, Spencer, said Miss Egerton, to Mr. Spencer, who just then joined the group, which surrounded us. You do me too much honour, Madam, said he, bowing, but positively it is an honour that I never—in short, I am not so ambitious, as to aspire to the honour of—peace, good

man, interrupted the mad girl, you talk so seldom, that I do believe you have forgot how; honour, honour, honour, what tautology—as sure as any thing, you are the man; well, I think we should make a good compact, and that is as fashionable in matrimony as colopis; the gordian knot will be composed of coquilicot and black; but I hope you will die before you are a bishop, for I do not think you would look well in lawn sleeves and a great wig; a man must be really great, to sustain that character with dignity, or else the paraphernalia of his dress, serves only to make insignificance more conspicuous. Oh! fye, Miss Egerton, said Lord Ormond, you are too severe. Not at all, my lord, it is the puppy parsons of the present day, who have brought religion into disrepute; if they were all as good as some of our clergymen, they would reform

reform us, whether we would or no. I always feel the better for being in Mr. Orme's company, and am generally reasonable for two or three hours after; if he had been here, I should not have rattled away so giddily; a single look from him, corrects me; but the presence of my friend Spencer, is no kind of check to my folly; this simple truth is a severer satire upon him, than any my wild fancy could dictate. There was no forbearing to join the general laugh against poor Mr. Spencer, who hardly knew how to take all this roasting; but he has a determined politeness to all people of rank, or, as he affects to call them, *nous autres*, so he bit his lips, and swallowed the bitter potion. While we were engaged in this manner, I observed a black domino pull the white nun by the sleeve; she immediately quitted Lord Ormond's side, and fol-

lowed him; nor did Lord Ormond seem to take the least notice of her departure, but continued chatting with Miss Egerton, and our party, till the fortuneteller had fully explained the tablet of fate to Miss Egerton; she told her, that her second husband would be a miser, her third a spenthrift and gamester. As to the miser, said Miss Egerton, I know how to get rid of him in six weeks; I will wear lace of twenty guineas a yard, to trim the bottom of my robe; the sum total of my milliner's bill will give him an apoplexy; but the gamester, I do not know what to do with him—too selfish to feel for others, too indiscreet to feel for himself—through what medium can I reach his heart; heart did I say, but a gamester has none; his vice is as fatal to the heart, as a consumption is to the lungs, and consumes it far more rapidly; his fate must be decided

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by a die—and the deuce may take him for me.

I do not know whether you are tired with reading all the giddy sallies of this talkative girl, my dear Madam, but my reason for repeating them is, that in her careless way, she never fails to lash the reigning follies of the times; she speaks without fear of reproof, or the least concern, least her hearers should be offended; in short, her manner is so well known, that she is a kind of priveleged person, and nobody takes exception at what she says. No doubt, her birth, and connections make things pass well from her, that would be highly resented from an inferior person. Well, but if I daudle so, we shall never get into the supper-room. Soon after the conversation above related, Lord Ormond and the fortuneteller

tuneteller left us, and Sir Henry Paget joined us; the summons to supper soon followed, and when we entered the supper pavillion, we found the Duchess, and Lady Caroline, ready to receive us. A table, ornamented with emblematic decorations, was set apart for the Lady of the Leaf, and her attendants; and the Lady of the Flower, and her attendants, were to be guests—as in Dryden,

The Lady of the Leaf ordained a feast,
And made the Lady of the Flower her guest.

Miss Egerton belonged to the Daisy Party, as most suitable to her disposition; when we were all seated, Lord Ormond entered, leading in the white nun, unmasked, and who do you think it was, Miss Evelyn! Nothing could equal the astonishment of every

every; body I am sure I could scarcely believe my eyesight, for I had fancied the nun before she unmasked, to be a far more elegant person than Miss Evelyn, who though tall and genteel, is not so perfect a figure as to excite such admiration, as the incognita did. You will think me romantic in my supposition, I dare say, but I must own, that I think there was some trick in it, and that Miss Evelyn knows it, for I do not think it was her whom we saw before supper. The Duchess was evidently displeased, and said, addressing Lord Ormond, your lordship must abide by the consequence of your tardiness; the table is full, and Lord Henry Pemberton has been so kind as to undertake the irksome task of attending to Caroline, which had occasioned your lordship so much ennui. I fear you must seek a seat at another table, where no doubt the

fair

fair companion you have so publicly chosen, will compensate for every other loss. Lord Ormond bowed, and smiling, with unaffected goodnature, led Miss Evelyn to another table. After supper, dancing was again proposed, but Lady Caroline declining it, the quadrilles were not repeated. Some country dances were however danced, but the spirit of the entertainment died with the Duchess's good-humour. I pitied poor Miss Evelyn, who experienced the most cutting coldness, from both the Duchess, and Lady Caroline. I saw the Duke of Beaumont talking to his son with great warmth, after supper; I dare say he was reproving him for his neglect of Lady Caroline. To be sure, it was unlike Lord Ormond, to shew a premeditated slight; but perhaps, he thought it the best way of replying to the Duchess's advances; for it was evident to

every

every one, ever since Lord Ormond came hither, that it was expected by the whole family, he should pay his addresses to Lady Caroline, and to me it has appeared quite as plain, that his lordship was otherwise engaged. After supper, before the gentlemen joined us, Miss Egerton said to Miss Evelyn, there has been some juggle among you to-night, Emma, I am sure, for I never could mistake your face for the one I saw unmasked to Lord Ormond in the lime walk. Ah! said Miss Evelyn, carelessly, there are secrets in all families, as my friend Scrubb says. Miss Evelyn, said the Duchess sternly, your conduct this evening, and Lord Ormond's, and your inuendoes have not passed unnoticed by my displeasure. Miss Evelyn made no reply, and Miss Egerton, who is always sincerely

sorry

sorry when her imprudence has given pain to another, endeavoured to turn what she had just said, into drollery, by pretending to examine Miss Evelyn's features more exactly. Yes, yes, said she, your nose is rather aquiline, and the doubtful light shed by the varigated lamps gave a soft turn to the whole of your phisiognomy, very favourable to my ideas of beauty. I perceive it was you, and *je vous fait mon compliment* upon the brilliant conquest you have made; upon my word I shall feel myself very happy to pay my congratulations, to the Countess of Ormond. You are all goodness I know, my dear Miss Egerton, replied Miss Evelyn, but I hope you will be congratulated yourself, long before so wonderful an event as that takes place. The gentlemen then entering the saloon, the conversation

versation ended. Lord Ormond came and requested the honour of Lady Caroline's hand for the first country dance, but was refused with a good deal of hauteur. Your ladyship does not intend dancing any more this evening then, said Lord Ormond. Does that follow of course, my lord, because I have refused to dance the first with your lordship? Not at all, Madam; may I then hope that your ladyship will honour me for the next. No, my Lord, I am engaged for the next with Lord Henry Pemberton. Miss Lenox will you do me the honour to accept a refused hand. I did not intend dancing any more, but rather than your lordship should be at a loss for a partner— oh! interrupted Lady Caroline, Lord Ormond cannot be at a loss for a partner sure, when Emma Evelyn is disengaged. Miss

Evelyn

Evelyn does not choose to dance, Madam, said Lord Ormond, dancing would appear out of character with her habit. Your lordship did right, to know her determination, before you applied elsewhere, said Lady Caroline, haughtily. I got up, and gave my hand to Lord Ormond, that no farther pique might be seen, as it mortified me extremely to see Lady Caroline forget herself so much, as to appear hurt by the slight Lord Ormond had shewn her. When we had gone down the dance, Lord Ormond said, it gives me much pain, Miss Lenox, to find that I have incurred Lady Caroline's displeasure so highly, by being a little too late when the quadrille dancers were assembling; I never saw any thing like caprice in her ladyship's disposition before; the attention I paid Miss Evelyn, was the most

most accidental thing in the world; and when my motives for it are explained, which they will be one day, added his lordship with emphasis, Lady Caroline herself will be ready to do justice to the propriety of my conduct. Oh! said I, my lord, I think there is no apology necessary for a circumstance so immaterial; the Duchess thought Lady Caroline slighted, and persuaded her ladyship to think so too; but I am sure my amiable friend has too much good sense, to feel any resentment on so trifling an occasion, when once she is at leisure to reflect upon it coolly. Lady Caroline is an enchanting woman, said Lord Ormond, and were it not for that hauteur which she inherits from the Duchess, would be a faultless angel; when I see, added his lordship, the lovely Miss Lenox, and her charming friend,

friend, I cannot forbear wishing a sweet friend of mine was with them; the trio might challenge the world to produce such another; let me bespeak your friendship, Madam, for the adored of my soul; if I am ever so happy as to be able to introduce her to Miss Lenox, may I hope she will receive her, with her accustomed goodness. I shall think myself honoured, my lord, by so high a proof of your lordship's esteem, and believe me, I am never more happy, than when doing justice to the superior accomplishments of my own sex; they may kindle emulation, but never excite envy. Envy is too foul a weed to flourish in so fair a soil, replied his Lordship gallantly; and here ended our conversation. Nothing material occcurred the rest of the evening, only Lord Henry Pemberton's exultation in

the

the notice Lady Caroline bestowed upon him, and the determined coldness of her ladyship to Lord Ormond, and poor Miss Evelyn. At about five o'clock in the morning we separated, the brilliant masquerade was concluded, and I think it is time my letter was. Heaven knows how you will wade through it; however, it is the last I shall write from hence, as I am determined to return to Lenox Abbey with Mrs. Sydney, on Tuesday. In relating all the wonders of the masquerade, I have not had time to tell you, that Sir Henry Paget did me the honour to propose for me to Mrs. Lenox, which was declined of course, and a prior engagement pleaded. His offers were unconditionally generous and noble, and my dear mother assured me, that if I was not engaged to

Augustus,

Augustus, she should have warmly seconded his proposal. But I may say with the old song, " my constant heart can never change," if I do not marry Augustus, I will never marry at all. Farewell, my dear and respected friend,

Tenderly your's,

L. L.

LETTER

LETTER II.

Lord Ormond to Mr. Travers.

GROSVENOR-SQUARE,

June 1.

MY DEAR SIR,

I FEEL myself extremely indebted to you, for the pleasant information conveyed in your last letter.* It makes me very happy to find, that you like the situation of your house, and are pleased with those of your neighbours, whom you have been introduced to. The friendly offices you express yourself too grateful for, to Mr. Bol-

* This letter does not appear.

ton, my father's agent, please, but do not surprise me; he possesses benevolence and urbanity, in a most eminent degree, and is a truly respectable character; in him my father has found, for these thirty years, a faithful steward, and a sincere and affectionate friend; and I am persuaded, that nothing could have occurred more consonant with the good man's wishes, than an opportunity of obliging, and shewing respect to one, so justly beloved by his old favourite George. Pray tell Mr. Bolton, that I have not forgotten his indulgence to my infant wishes, and that I shall feel myself extremely happy to assure him in person, as soon as my business will admit of my visiting ——shire, of the continuance of my gratitude and esteem. As to what you mention respecting the builder's estimate, I beg it may not give you a minute's uneasiness. My father does not wish

wish the repairs and alterations to be done in a saving, but a convenient manner, and greatly approves of the proposal of pulling down the left wing of the house, and entirely new building it, on a modern and elegant plan, such as you may fix upon; for as you are to live in it, it is his request, that every thing should be furnished according to your own particular taste, and he entreats that expence may be no object, in any thing that is done, for as he intends frequently visiting you, he hopes you will have the politeness to take care that the rooms are spacious and lofty enough, for so tall a man to walk about them, without the fear of knocking his head against the ceiling. My father would have had every thing in complete repair, before you were inducted into the living, had he not known by experience, that

there are hardly two tastes to be found, which exactly correspond; and however your politeness had induced you to approve of what you saw, he could not have felt himself secure, that you did not secretly wish, such and such things had been differently disposed; and this was the sole reason of his leaving you the trouble of superintendin the builders, &c. &c. at the vicarage; but he begs you will not lose sight of the idea, that the expence resulting therefrom, is wholly and solely his own, and that you cannot more effectually oblige him, than by letting the gift be worthy of the donor. Remember, my dear Sir, that my father's purse is as ample as his heart, and that he considers himself more obliged to you, than to any other man breathing; these trifles are therefore only discharging a small part of a great obligation. I am now

going

going to make a petition, and I know your taste and mine are so alike, that you will have no difficulty in complying with my request; it is, that you would preserve, in the old form, with its gothic painted windows, the large room that opens into the garden, the only perfect relick of the ancient priory, and have it fitted up with shelves for a library. No spot can be better calculated for reading, and reflection; the solemn, yet clear light, reflected through the antique casements—its seclusion from the rest of the house—the beautiful sylvan scene that presents itself to the eye, when the folding doors are thrown open to the gently sloping lawn, at whose verge the clear river smoothly winds along, and loses itself in the dark wood, whose friendly branches shelter it from the cold north wind; while to the south the open country smiles in beauteous

cultivation. How often of a fine summer's evening have I stood there entranced in peaceful meditation, marking the glories of the setting sun, and listening to the wood-lark's dulcet notes; what a pity, that such a sweet serenity of mind, should ever be disturbed by the rude gusts of passion. Oh! what a demigod were man, if in his riper years, he could preserve the pure, calm innocence, of early youth; then would he, like the glassy lake, when not a zephyr flutters its light wing, behold the glorious face of heaven, reflected in his own pure bosom; then pride, ambition, envy, hatred, and the horrid train which now, in varied shapes, destroy our cherished joys, would flee into the stygian shades of dark oblivion, and love alone be left to warm us into activity. You will smile, no doubt, my dear Sir, to see that in my rhapsodical dismission

mission of the passions, I do not choose to part with our mutual favourite, the little blind god; but what a long digression I have made from the subject I was first treating upon, namely, the new modelling of your house; I believe it was out of the library doors, that I took my sublime flight; with your leave I will return by the same avenue, just to tell you, that when the proper bookcases, shelves, &c. which I desire may be all of mahogany, are complete, I shall take the liberty, of sending down to you a collection of books, which I have purchased, and of which I beg your acceptance, as a small token of the affection I bear you; it comprises, I believe, nearly all the best antient, and modern classical authors, excepting a few scarce copies, which my father has kindly promised to supply me with, as I could not purchase them;

he is so fortunate as to possess duplicates of many scarce books; my maternal grandfather, who possessed the finest library in England, having bequeathed it to him. You cannot imagine how I shall exult if I find you really approve of me, as a mental caterer; for I know you too well, to fear flattery on such a head; as whatever it might cost your good nature to disappoint me, I am convinced you would not hesitate to correct my errors, in either judgment or taste. I have one little omission to reproach you with; you do not say a word about a certain amiable young lady, whom I hope to see filling up a respectable place by the fire side at the vicarage, e're many months are past. You have sought her out no doubt; what then can your silence, on so interesting a subject indicate. Surely it does not imply that she is faithless! Answer me, I entreat

treat you, in your next. I shall be most anxious till I hear your happiness is confirmed. As to myself, I have miracles to relate. I have found my incognita—am informed of her family, and mean shortly to call upon you, my dear friend, to ratify my choice, by your approbation. Her rank, and fortune, are equal to her beauty. Nothing can equal her worth. I will not affront that so much as to compare it with accidental circumstances of distinction, for I think with Euripedes,

" There's no nobility among the wicked,
" But with the virtuous it is ever found."

I can fancy I behold your surprise at this intelligence. I will no longer keep you in suspense, but proceed to inform you of the whole process of this unexpected discovery.

The day after I arrived at Northington Castle, my father hinted to me, that it would give him great pleasure if an union with his old friend and school-fellow, the Duke of Northington's family could be brought about through my means; and as Lady Caroline Egerton is unexceptionable in person and mind, and the heiress of a large, independent fortune, bequeathed to the Duke's eldest daughter by her maternal grandfather, little objection could be expected to be made on my part, unless I could plead prior engagements, and of such an untoward circumstance, my dear father had never dreamt. You will easily conceive the pain I felt, at the idea of overturning all his well founded schemes of happiness, and by confessing a prepossession in favour of a woman, of whose name, and condition, I was wholly ignorant. My first impulse was, to inform

my

my father of my unfortunate situation, lest he should cherish hopes it was not in my power to realize; but when I attempted to speak to him on the subject, he would not hear me, and desired me to take farther time for consideration, and rest satisfied that, as my happiness was his sole motive for making the proposal, he should never lose sight of that dear object; and therefore, if I found I could not like the lady, I might depend upon his implicit acquiescence with my wishes. Could any thing, my dear friend, be more generous; I was so overcome with his goodness, that I really, for three days afterwards, did my utmost to admire the charming Lady Caroline, and most devoutly wished that I could drive the lovely Emily from my remembrance. Perfidious, sacriligious thought! scarcely to be extenuated by the filial affection that inspired

it. Indeed, had it sprung from any other cause, I never could have forgiven myself, for having harboured it for a single instant. I need not say, it was a fruitless attempt; as well might I have attempted to dislodge my heart itself, as the sweet tenant that possesses it. I believe I wrote you word, that I had found our old fellow-traveller, Mr. Orme, here, and that he was chaplain at the castle, an office he had held for many years, at the scanty stipend of one hundred per annum; the sole reward ever bestowed upon him by the Duke, whose tutor he was; the first opportunity I could get hold of, I enquired after my soul's idol; he assured me she was well, and what I know will give your lordship pleasure, added he, retains a most grateful remembrance of her generous deliverers. This piece of intelligence reached me in the midst of my heroic resolution of endeavouring

endeavouring to forget her; how I despised myself for making the attempt! you may be sure I did not spare entreaties to Mr. Orme, to inform me who the angelic creature was; he replied, your lordship will know soon, in the mean time you cannot think too highly of her birth, and connections; but be cautious, I entreat you, lest the Duchess should suspect there is any secret intelligence between us. I obeyed the good man's injunctions, in a manner that satisfied him. The day Lady Caroline came of age, (that is, the age of eighteen, the time appointed in her grand-father's will,) was to be particularly brilliant, and a masquerade *al Fresco*, was to conclude the amusements of the day. Never was any body so happily busy, as the Duchess, who delights in contriving fetes, and to do her justice, excels all the projectors of those

kind

kind of things, I ever met with. Every thing was elegant, convenient, and comfortable; and the decorations, superb beyond description; her grace has no consideration to restrain her taste for expences, as I have been told she gives nothing in charity, excepting where a number of fashionable names on a list oblige her to follow their example, and squeeze out a poor five guineas, for some son or daughter of distress, from a purse stuffed with bank notes, whose happier destination is the pharoah table. I do not envy her grace her feelings, if she has any; but those who live in the constant whirl of folly and dissipation, have little time to consult their feelings; their fine sensibilities confine themselves to the fictious woes of some love-lorn damsel in a novel; or the becoming terror excited by the approach of a little harmless insect to their

immaculate

immaculate persons. And here let me stop, to pay the tribute so justly due, to your kind care, my dear Sir, who by your wise precepts, and bright example, have taught me justly to estimate the superiority of man, above all the rest of the animal creation, and to fear to prostitute the inestimable gift of a bountiful creator, to purposes unworthy a being endued with the powers of reason and reflection, for is it not the greatest insult we can offer to the divine author of nature, to use our mental faculties in no study but that of frivolous entertainments—the glorious power of speech, merely to utter a jargon of unmeaning phrases, and to waste our precious time, in running from one scene of amusement to another; an employment as useful to ourselves and others, as catching butterflies, but not quite so innocent. What a chaos must that head and heart,

present

present to the kind eye of reasonable reflection, that is stuffed with nothing but the events of a fashionable life. The prospect of their lives affords little but a series of selfish enjoyment. No pity shewn to others, how do they ask it for themselves of him who has said, with what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you again. These are serious reflections to arise from the description of a masquerade, and yet they invariably pursue me through the scenes of levity and dessipation, in which I have so often occasion to mix. When my heart suggest the idea, that perhaps some distressed tradesman is pining with a large family of beloved children, because the unthinking extravagance of the very entertainment of which I am partaking, has put it out of the power of those who give it to discharge his bill, so justly due, so long demanded in

vain—oppressed by merciless creditors, he is unable to satisfy—he is dragged to jail; born to freedom, and having lived in credit, his honest heart throbs, proudly indignant at the cruel bondage—he sees the silent agony of his tender wife—he listens to the artless interrogatories of his innocent offspring, who wonder why papa cannot go with them from that ugly dark room—and entreat him to give mamma more money, for she does not buy them bread enough, and eats none herself. He listens, but he cannot answer; the suffocating fullness of grief denies a word, a tear; he raised his strained eye to heaven—a convulsive sob burst from his over charged bosom, and—he breathes no more! Tell me, ye sons and daughters of luxury, can ye not pause a moment, to think of the widows ye have made—the orphans ye have deprived of a father's tender

care,

care, for it matters not whether they are enclosed in the silent tomb, or in that monument of the living, a jail; and when every delicacy the inverted season can afford you, is offered to your pampered appetites, can you forget, unfeelingly forget, those who would gladly feed upon the crumbs that fall from your tables.

I am sure, though the subject I was relating was an interesting one, you will forgive this long digression, as I am persuaded nothing would give you greater pain, than to find I was become insensible to the dangers of a fashionable levity of mind. I will now proceed with my relation. At the pompous masquerade I was just now talking of, I had the honour of dancing with Lady Caroline, a dance of her own composing, and taken from Dryden's Fable of the Flower and the Leaf; the set consisted of eight

eight ladies, and the same number of gentlemen ; after the first dance was over, while I was standing talking to my fair partner and some more ladies, a gipsy addressed us with the usual entreaty from that sisterhood, pray let me tell your fortune. Lady Caroline, with great good-humour had her's told first, and then I presented my palm for her inspection. She muttered a warning, not to pursue a shadow, and lose the substance, and putting a paper into my hand, told me it would be my own fault, if I was not happy. I was very impatient to see its contents, and left the ladies as soon as I could, in order to satisfy my curiosity. I then read the following lines.

You love a noble virgin fair,
And are by her belov'd again,
Yet do these crosses promise care,
And many an anxious hour of pain.

Three

Three tedious years are pass'd away,
Since you beheld the blooming maid;
Say, is she in this group so gay,
Has no soft charm her form betray'd?

Hast thou a lover's piercing eye,
What then avails the thin disguise;
Take for thy guide fair sympathy,
And soon you'll find the lovely prize.

I did not know what to make of this strange kind of address, nor could I imagine who this well instructed gipsy could be, who seemed so thoroughly versed in the state of my heart. I was determined not to be trifled with, and so I pursued; when I found her, come Madam, said I, taking her by the hand, I shrewdly suspect some treachery beneath your disguise; some fair face, and lovely form, disgraced by these uncouth,

couth, tattered garments ; remove that cloud, and convince me, that I have as much of the art of divination, as yourself, when fair faces are concerned. You say it is my own fault, if I am not happy, take care it is not your's. You are mistaken, my Lord, replied she, in a voice that I knew directly to be Miss Evelyn's, an amiable young lady who has been brought up with Lady Caroline. I conceal no fair face, or fine form ; but if you wish to find the lady my little billet alluded to, there she is, pointing to an elegant form, dressed as a white nun, who was leaning on a gentleman's arm, in a black domino, and who approached us as we were speaking. What am I to hope, said I, taking off my mask, and bowing respectfully, what am I to hope from the information I have just received ; the whirlwind of expectation is raised in my breast, let the bright

sun

sun of certainty arise, without a cloud, and calm the dread emotion. Upon my word, your Lordship is quite poetical, said Mr. Orme, for he was the black domino, but when you can descend from your heights, allow me to introduce an old acquaintance, who has been anxiously wishing to return you her thanks, in old England, for services performed in a more hostile kingdom. This is Lady Emily Egerton, added he, the Duke of Northington's eldest daughter, and right heiress to the great fortune, the acquirement of which, has been so brilliantly celebrated this day. I thought it too hard that the right owner should alone be excluded from the scene of festivity, and have therefore taken advantage of the masquerade habit, to introduce my sweet ward, where she has an undoubted right to be hailed queen of the sparkling throng; but that cannot yet

take

take place. I was mute with astonishment, and knew not what to think of Mr. Orme's speech, till the sweet sound of my adored Emily's voice broke on my delighted ear. She welcomed me to England, and added, that she hoped some future, happier day, to have it in her power to receive me in a manner more suitable to her rank, and more worthy the obligations she owed me, at the seat of her ancestors. I scarcely knew what answer I made, so out of my senses was I, at the joy of this unexpected meeting; but I know, that I was bold enough to press her lovely hand to my lips, and that she was so condescending as to accept my sincere apology for the liberty I had taken, and did me the justice to believe, it was the effect of the hurry of my spirits at the sudden, and unlooked for delight, of meeting with so beloved a friend. I make no doubt,

said

said Mr. Orme, of the surprise you must feel at this rencontre; and I dare say, added he, smiling, you as little thought of meeting me at the masquerade, as you did of seeing Lady Emily. You are right my good friend, replied I, I did not indeed expect to find you clad in the fantastic habit; but the noble motive well excuses it, and your worth ennobles every dress; the goodnatured Miss Evelyn has contributed her aid to our little schemes for to-night's pleasure, said Mr. Orme, or we could not have executed it. I am particularly indebted to your goodness, Madam, said I, addressing the kind gipsy, and it will be my study to evince my gratitude. It is impossible for me to shew mine, said Lady Emily, but it is very great, for Emma has been long my only female friend, a hard sentence with a mother, and a sister in the house! Miss

Evelyn

Evelyn kindly assured us, that her happiness depended so much upon that of her friend's, meaning Lady Emily, that she was amply compensated when any little service she could render added to the sum of it. Saying this, she left us, and Lady Emily, Mr. Orme, and I, took a delightful stroll among the least frequented walks of the terrestrial paradise which the Duchess's taste had created around us. While we were walking, Mr. Orme informed me of the outlines of the lovely, and interesting Emily's unfortunate story, but as it is impossible to do justice to it, in the limits of this letter, I shall defer giving it to you, till I write again, and only say, that she is the innocent victim of ungovernable avarice, and pusilanimous weakness. Mr. Orme, however, flatters me, with the hope, that when the Marquis of Hartly returns, the

scene will change, and my angel will be restored to her just right. May heaven fulfil the prophecy! Mr. Orme was so indulgent as to allow me a few minutes conversation with Lady Emily, and in that period, my long smothered passion broke forth, and I entreated her to give me the sacred power, of demanding redress for her unprecedented wrongs; but she forbid me to think of it, and in a manner sweet, but determined, refused to listen to any declaration of love, unsanctioned by her father's approbation. A breach of duty on his side, cannot excuse one on mine, added she; and let my sufferings be what they will, I will never add the sting of guilt, to their poignancy, for then, and then only, would they become insupportable! I do not hesitate to own, added she, that I should be painfully affected by the loss of your Lordship's

ship's esteem. Your generous behaviour to me in France, has placed you high in mine; and I am most happy in this opportunity of assuring you of my gratitude; if we never meet again, may you be happy—happy, as you deserve, and then your lot will be an enviable one. Oh! speak not thus, my lovely Emily, said I, you torture me beyond expression; not meet again—is there a power on earth strong enough to prevent it, unless you wish the separation? I do not wish it, indeed I do not, replied she, but as I said before, I may be an unfortunate, but will never be an undutiful child. After many entreaties, I prevailed with my charmer to bless my longing eyes with a sight of her lovely countenance, and just as she graciously complied with my request, and removed the enviable mask from the most beautiful face in the world,

who should pass by, but that good natured, talkative girl, Miss Egerton. Lady Emily replaced her mask in an instant, but the other had caught a glance, which set her voluble tongue in motion, and put the whole company in confusion; for she told the Duchess, that I was flirting with some pretty parson's daughter; she was sure she was not a woman of fashion, for she did not know her, and I was too much taken up with my new acquaintance to attend to Lady Caroline, whose partner I was, and who was waiting my coming to repeat the dance; for so absorbed had I been in the delight of finding Lady Emily, that I was insensible of the time that had elapsed, till reminded by Mr. Orme that my absence would be remarked. I tore myself from the charmer of my soul, and returned to the saloon, where I found the Duchess avowedly angry,

angry, and my fair partner, not very well pleased; as I was most sincerely sorry for the neglect I had unavoidably, and quite undesignedly shewn, I made the best apology in my power, which was accepted by every one, but that conceited coxcomb Lord Henry Pemberton, with whose behaviour you was so disgusted at Berlin. The pert thing pretended to call me to an account for disrespect to Lady Caroline, and told me, I should have brought the pretty nun to plead for me. I answered him with proper spirit, and had I been as hot-headed as his Lordship, and not held the horrid practice of duelling in just abhorrence, the consequence might have been very disagreeable. However, it passed off without any thing more than a mutual *refroidissement*, and as we never were very good friends, there is no loss. After the

dance was over, I returned to my lovely Emily, and persuaded her to let me lead her to her sister, to whom I introduced her in an ambiguous manner, which I saw gave great surprise, and displeasure to the Duchess; however, I knew it was impossible any body should detect the truth, for Mr. Orme, and Miss Evelyn had agreed, that it was absolutely necessary Lady Emily should retire before supper, as every body must then lay by their masks. Miss Evelyn was to retire with her ladyship, and leaving her gipsyd ress, assume one exactly like Lady Emily's, which she had expressly for that purpose. She did so, and when she returned to the company, I led her into the supper room, to the utter astonishment of every body, who had heard the nun story, and little imagined it was Miss Evelyn; but I was extremely pained at what the good-

natured

natured girl suffered, both from the Duchess, and her daughter, who could neither of them brook the high insult of a preference shewn to an inferior, by one who had been considered, in spite of himself, an admirer of Lady Caroline. There was a charming young lady there, a Miss Lenox, who possesses all Lady Caroline's beauty, without her hauteur, and bears away the palm from her Ladyship, in every company, for that very reason, and who did every thing in her power, to conciliate matters for us, but in vain. I am sure the affront will never be forgiven. After supper, my father remonstrated, very seriously with me, on my behaviour to Lady Caroline, and said, it had given him great pain. I assured him, I was extremely hurt at it myself, but if he would have the goodness to suspend his judgment, till the next day, I did not fear being

able to give him satisfactory reasons for the whole transaction. To this he graciously assented, and the next morning I opened my whole heart to him, and related the discovery of the preceding evening, and for which I had Mr. Orme's consent. Nothing could equal his astonishment; but he no longer wishes me united to Lady Caroline, but has given his full sanction to my choice of the unfortunate, but lovely Lady Emily, and has kindly promised to unite his endeavours, with those of Lord Hartly at his return, to reinstate the sweet sufferer in her lawful possessions.

We shall not stay many days in town after the birth-day, but I shall write to you again before I leave it. I intend accompanying my friend Paget, on a visit to Fancourt, where we are warmly invited by

our

our old schoolfellow Mountague. Farewell, my dear friend, do me the justice to believe, that my respect equals my affection, and that,

I am,

Your sincerely obliged friend,

ORMOND.

LETTER III.

Miss Dudly to Miss Foster.

AND so, Madam, you think yourself privileged to preach to me, because I have made a request, not quite consistent with your pusitanical notions of honour. I did let myself down, greatly, to be sure, when I formed a friendship with a person so much my inferior, as you are; and you have verified the old adage, that familiarity breeds contempt. Little people like you, are easily puffed up by the notice of their superiors, and are too apt to forget the sun whose fostering beams created the consequence they are so proud of. I hope, for the future,

ture, however, that you will recollect the distance fortune has placed between us, and learn to treat me with becoming respect. I should never have done you the honour to reply to your ill-judged, and impertinent letter, but for the pleasure of informing you, that notwithstanding all your caution, and the great regard you express for the beautiful, and faultless Miss Lenox, you have supplied me with ample means for destroying the confidence of her lover. The account you give of the power of her irresistible charms on the hearts of her beholders, and which you wrote confessedly to mortify your friend, I have artfully converted into weapons against my detested rival. Already is the heart of the credulous Augustus filled with doubts and jealousies, respecting this sweet paragon of female excellence, and so deeply have I

laid my schemes, that it is impossible for you to frustrate them, ungrateful Sophia, even should you be mean enough to betray the confidence I reposed in you before I knew the treachery of your heart. To your farther mortification be it known, that I have found a friend who will assist me in my endeavours to break off a match, unworthy of my amiable cousin. I am determined to succeed, or die in the enterprise; for hatred, and revenge, are now added to love, and jealousy, and you know,

" Heaven hath no wrath, like love to hatred turn'd,
" Nor hell a fury like a woman scorn'd."

I shall do what I can to serve your father's interest, in the same generous manner you have acted by me; remember that, and tremble at the resentment of the injured,

A. DUDLY.

LETTER IV.

The same to Mrs. Dudly.

DEAR MADAM.

I HAVE to acknowledge the favour of your last kind letter,* and I thank you, most heartily and sincerely for the assistance you have so indulgently promised me, in my laudable endeavours to recall your amiable son to reason, and to remove from his heart, a partiality disgraceful to the noble family he belongs to; nor do I entertain a doubt of success.

* This does not appear.

success. Already has the poison began to work; as he believes me totally disinterested in the event, he is the easier imposed upon by the seeming artless manner in which I have informed him of Miss Lenox's supposed perfidy; the enclosed letter, which I took out of the letter box that always stands in our great hall, and of which I keep the key, will shew you the effect my information has taken on his mind, and the intercepting it will be an effectual means of preventing an explanation; when he finds his beloved does not answer this passionate epistle, he will no longer doubt her inconstancy. When our wishes are once accomplished on this important head, there will be time enough to lead him gradually to the ultimate object of my fondest hopes, to that union you have been so kind as to

honour

honour with your decided approbation. Yo will then, and always, find a grateful and affectionate admirer in,

Dear Madam,

Your dutiful niece,

A. DUDLY.

LETTER

LETTER V.

Intercepted Letter enclosed in the preceding.

Augustus Dudly to Miss Lenox.

HOW shall I find words to address my Louisa, which will be expressive of the agony I now feel; but did I say *my* Louisa. Alas! perhaps she is no longer mine; the happy Sir Henry Paget—but hold, there is madness in that thought. I cannot support it. She cannot, cannot be. No, I am certain some fiend, some infernal fiend, has invented the detested falsehood, on purpose to undo me; to rob me of a treasure, dearer to me than life itself, and I was base to believe

believe it, even for an instant. Forgive me, sweet object of my tenderest love, forgive the errors that spring from too exquisite feeling. If I could calmly have been told, that you had forgotten me—had preferred another to your once loved Augustus—say, should I be worthy that regard, which is at once the glory, and pleasure of my life. Why can I not fly to you, and throwing myself at your feet, read my sentence in those lovely eyes; but it cannot be; curse on the delays of law. Of this, however, be assured, that no prospect of advantage, no fear of loss shall detain me; I will return immediately, let what will be the consequence, if I do not receive a letter from your beloved hand by return of post, to tell me you are still the same; the least assurance from you will restore my peace. I know you will not deceive me; that face,

full

full of candour, and innocence, could never hide a faithless heart. Write then, my adored Louisa; if you are silent, I shall believe what has been told me—shall know that you have deceived me, and then death alone can terminate the sufferings of the wretched,

AUGUSTUS DUDLY.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

Mr. Travers to Lord Ormond.

YOUR very kind letter, my dear Lord Ormond, demands my earliest acknowledgements. It is but fitting you should know how happy you make me. I do indeed consider myself one of the most fortunate of men, not for the innumerable benefits your Lordship's generous heart, and liberal fortune, have bestowed; grateful as I feel for the noble provision that is made for me, the emotions awakened in my bosom, on that subject, are faint, when compared to those warm sentiments of delight, affection, and gratitude, which swell my enraptured heart,

heart, almost to bursting, whenever I contemplate the fair picture your pure mind presents before me. To see so great a phenomenon in these degenerate days, as a young man of fashion untainted with the follies, and vices, of the times; preserving, amidst the temptations that surround him, his principles inviolate, his character without blemish, and nobly daring to meet without dismay,

The world's dread laugh,
Which scarce the firm philosopher can scorn.

Who, amidst the gay scenes of revelry and delight, which seduce the minds of his companions with irresistable fascination, turns his reflecting eye, with benevolent solicitude, to the dwelling of the honest, but oppressed mechanic whose industry has

supplied

supplied the luxury around him, reduced by the extravagance of his employer, to misery and death! Oh, my Lord, to behold such a phœnix, at once the love and admiration of all who knew him, and be able to say, this was my pupil, this peerless brilliant, received its last polish from these hands! think you not, my Lord, that the glory I derive from your glory, is a far dearer, higher recompence, than any within the reach of even your boundless fortune to bestow—yes, my Lord, I say it with honest pride, had your Lordship disappointed my anxious wishes, my fond hopes, by becoming, like some of those insignificant beings that disgrace the nobility they were born to, and whose follies, and vices, are only rendered more conspicuous by the distinctions of birth, and fortune—I say, my Lord, had you become one of those, I would have

have carried my regrets far from you, and have set myself down in some obscure corner, to lament the fallacy of all my theoretical principles of education; disappointed of the only recompence that could satisfy my mind, I should have scorned to accept any other; and I would at least have convinced you, that all your riches could not purchase for you the esteem and countenance of the man, who valued his integrity beyond any earthly consideration, and who would have felt too poignantly the injury you had done him, in suffering him to devote his talents to so little advantage, to have accepted any pecuniary gift at your hands. But, heaven has ordained it otherwise, and I thank you, my Lord, with my whole soul, I thank you, for the honour your character reflects upon my care; and I entreat your Lordship to remember,

through

through every period of your life, that every time you do a noble action, resist a temptation, or persevere in a severe duty, you confer an inexpressible obligation upon a friend, who holds you dearer than any other created being.

I gave your Lordship's message to Mr. Bolton. Your kind heart would have been gratified, could you have seen the pleasure it gave that worthy man. My dear young Lord, said he, possesses the same condescending goodness in manhood, that marked his earlier days. I shall hope to see a model of his noble father. Ah! tell him, my good Sir, if his Lordship could know the anxious hours I have passed for his sake, when I have reflected on the dangers that pursue a young nobleman from the time he leaves the nursery, till he reaches

years

years of maturity, his good heart would find an additional reward in the satisfaction I now feel, at hearing he has so nobly resisted every temptation to wrong. I verily believe, added the good man, it would have broken my heart, had his Lordship turned out such a character, as some that I know. And now let me beg your Lordship, to present my best acknowledgements to the Duke of Beaumont, for the *carte blanche* his grace so generously gives me, concerning the buildings, &c. &c. and his grace may depend upon my doing his noble sentiments justice, in every particular. You will be pleased, my dear Lord, to find that I had actually given orders for fitting up the gothic room as a library, before I received your Lordship's letter, since it proves, beyond a doubt, that similarity of taste between us, you so flatteringly wish to believe

in.

in. I shall now pursue your Lordship's directions respecting the bookcases, &c. and shall feel an additional attachment to the room, since I find it is dear to you. As we agree so well about the library, there can be little doubt of my approving your Lordship's choice of the books that are to fill it, for I cannot recollect a single instance of a difference of opinion between us, when the faults or beauties of any author were in discussion. Accept, therefore, my unconditional thanks for your very kind attention to my wishes, and the liberal present you design me.

As I think I have given your Lordship a pretty good dose of approbation, and praise, I think you cannot call me severe, if I give you a gentle reprimand. How could you be so cruel, as to close your

letter without satisfying me on so very interesting a subject, as the finding of your amiable Emily, and, content with knowing the particulars yourself, leave me to ruminate at my leisure in the wide field of conjecture, vainly endeavouring to elucidate the mystery of her being the daughter of the Duke of Northington. I always understood his Grace had only one son, and one daughter. If he had another, and such an one as the charming lady I saw at Genoa, what motive could possibly induce him to conceal her from the world? Indeed, my dear Sir, I do not thank you for this trial of patience; you certainly supposed me possessed of more stoicism than I can boast, or you would not have put me to so severe a test. Perhaps, after all, it was une petite malice to punish me for my supposed neglect, in not informing your sly Lordship, of

the particulars of my progress in the field of gallantry. I might retaliate now, if I pleased, by leaving you still in the dark, but I will be more generous that I might induce you to adopt the like sentiments, and make you speedily take my poor curiosity off the rack. First then, I will begin by a surprizing piece of information. I have not yet seen the lady your Lordship so kindly enquires after. Your Lordship has the advantage of me there; for though I have not seen her, you have, and conversed with her too; and upon my word, flirted with her enough to make a man less confident than your old friend Travers, jealous of you both. Not to play with you any longer, Miss Evelyn is the lady you have so kindly wished to see filling a chair at the vicarage. Miss Evelyn is, and has ever been, the sweet centre of all my hopes,

and wishes; her small fortune, and the friendship she had formed in her earliest infancy with Lady Caroline Egerton, induced her to accept an offer made her by the Duchess, at Lady Caroline's request, of becoming companion to her daughter; and she has been with that amiable lady, ever since the first year I was abroad with your Lordship. I was not informed of this change, till after my return to England, and I forbore to mention it to your Lordship, when I found you was going to visit Northington Castle, because, I wished to hear your unprejudiced opinion of my favourite. You will easily guess how flattered I am to find it, what it is; and what pleasure I felt, at that part of your letter, where you relate the service she rendered to Lady Emily and yourself. It was natural to expect she would incur the Duchess's displeasure, when

it

it was supposed she had attracted your Lordship's attention, in preference to Lady Caroline; but I know little of her heart, if she did not find more than an equivalent for her sufferings, in the consciousness of having done her duty to an unfortunate friend. Whatever the secret may be, my dear Emmy, is acquainted with it; however, I am not surprised to find that she knows how to keep it; for she has never given me the most distant hint of such a circumstance, though she wrote me a description of the castle she inhabits, and every anecdote of the family, on the knowledge of which no embargo was laid.—Farewell, my Lord, let me hear from you as soon as possible, and in the mean time rely upon the truth and affection of

Your obliged
And faithful humble servant,
EDWARD TRAVERS.

LETTER VII.

Lord Ormond to Mr. Travers.

YOU deserve to be satisfied, my dear Sir, and therefore you shall be, with all possible dispatch. Take the interesting narrative in Mr. Orme's own words.

Three and twenty years have now elapsed, since I returned from the continent with the present Duke of Northington, then Marquis of Hartly, where we had been making the grand tour. My pupil was much admired for his progress in the fine arts, particularly painting, in which he greatly excelled; indeed he was not deficient in

in any branch of polite learning; nor was his heart bad; but he had a foible, which, though at first sight, it appeared of trifling consequence, became, by yielding to its baleful influence, the fatal arbitrator of his fate—this was instability of mind; it mattered not what affection he bore, or what promises he made, the merest stranger could alienate the former, the most trifling occurrence induce him to break the latter; he would often set out in the morning with the best intentions imaginable, and the most determined purposes of doing right, when alas, the evening brought him home full of disappointment, ill-humour, and fruitless repentance; some giddy rake had prevailed upon him to relinquish his plan of improvement, and adopt one of pleasure, as it is falsely called; the moments had stolen unperceived away, at night

he was sensible of his loss, but incapable of repairing it. His Lordship was the darling son of his doting parents, who both seemed to live but for his happiness. A letter from the old Duke met us at Dover; it contained a request that we should immediately repair to Northington Castle, nor stop in London, but to change horses; his Grace's reason for this precaution will appear hereafter; on our arrival at the metropolis, I urged the Duke's request to my pupil, who said, he could not comply entirely with his father's wishes, as he was really so fatigued, he must sleep one night in town, to recover his exhausted strength; but we shall set off early to morrow morning, said he, and the difference of a few hours cannot be perceived by my father. To this seeming reasonable request, I unfortunately yielded; the fatal compliance has cost me many a

tear;

tear; it was near six o'clock, in March, when we reached Grosvenor-square, and by the time we had refreshed ourselves, it was quite dark. I am not known, said the Marquis, and therefore I shall take a walk for a few minutes, to buy a few trifles that I want, and with the execution of which I do not choose to trust my *Valet de Chambre.* I remonstrated on the impropriety of shewing himself any where, as his father had forbid his remaining in town, till he had seen him, doubtless for some excellent reason. He replied, that as he was only going into a few shops, his father's interdiction about remaining in London could have nothing to do with it; so saying, he took his hat and went out. I had amused myself with the newspaper for about an hour, when, to my inexpressible satisfaction, the Marquis returned. He threw himself on a sopha,

and yawning violently, asked me when I thought of going to bed. I shall retire about ten, my Lord, replied I, and hope you will do the same, for we must set out by day break to-morrow morning. Certainly, said he, and ringing for his valet, he gave him some orders in a whisper, and he directly retired. As Lord Hartly did not appear to relish conversation, which I attributed to the fatigue he complained of, and as we neither of us chose any supper, it was not quite ten o'clock, when we parted to go to our respective rooms; mine faced the square, and going to the window of it, about half an hour after I went up stairs, I was surprised to see a hackney coach stop at the door, and the Marquis's valet get out of it, and open the door with the key. The coach remained in waiting; what can be the matter, exclaimed I; surely this man has

has some business in hand, with which the Marquis is as little acquainted as I am. I was determined not to quit my post, till I saw how the coach was disposed of; so removing my candle, that I might not be observed by the coachman, I drew my curtain close, and took my station, with my eyes fixed on the coach. I had not waited more than a quarter of an hour, when the door opened, and the valet assisted a person, dressed in a white domino, to get into the coach, which immediately drove away, and the valet returned into the house. I was a good deal startled at what I had seen, and yet I could not believe it possible, that the Marquis was the person I had seen get into the coach, though the height exactly corresponded with his figure. These doubts can easily be satisfied, said I, to myself; I will go directly to Lord Hartly's apartment,

if he is in bed, I shall know my alarm is without foundation. I took my candle, and crossing the gallery, knocked at the Marquis's door. I received no answer; but still I continued knocking; the vallet came creeping up the stairs, and not a little dismay, and perplexity, were painted on his countenance, when he saw me at his Lord's door. Is Lord Hartly so fast asleep already, said I, that he cannot be awakened by the noise I have been so long making. "Me no can tell," replied Contoir, in his broken English, "me no can tell, but mi lor be very sommeileuse; and he lock his door, so no possible get in." I insist upon seeing his Lordship this instant, said I, in an authoritative tone of voice, should it even be necessary to break open the door to accomplish my purpose, "Ah! me no break the door, you sure of that; mi Lor shoot

me

me comme a pigeon." Very well, Mr. Contoir, said I, you shall answer for your intrigues to the Duke of Northington. I have just been a witness to your Lord's elopement, in a masquerade dress, and I also saw your assistance given to this mean trick, so much beneath his Lordship to be an actor in. *Monsieur de Orme, se met en colere pour un bagatelle. My lor est un jeune homme, il faut se passer de ses follies.* Open the door, said I, and let me have more obedience and less altercation. Ah! *pour le coup donc*, replied he, and pulling the key out of his pocket, opened the door, and introduced me into his Lord's tenantless room, where the cloaths he had pulled off, scattered in confusion around, convinced me my fears were but too justly awakened. No words can do justice to the anguish I felt, at this convinc-

ing

ing proof of my pupil's want of confidence in me. I threw myself into a great chair, by the fireside, and desired Contoir to retire to bed, as soon as he had arranged Lord Hartly's room. I mean, said I, to wait for his Lordship myself. "Mi lor no thank you for that, Mons. de Orme," said Contoir, shrugging up his shoulders; and as he quitted the room, he added with a hideous grimace, *quel triste homme ce gouveneur la.* Fatigued, disconcerted, and offended, you will judge how slowly the hours crept away; the hall clock had just struck five, when I heard a coach stop at the door and presently after, a gentle ring at the bell, which I suppose was the signal agreed upon between Lord Hartly and his man, for I found the porter was not in the secret. I descended the stairs with my candle in my hand,

hand, for all the lights had been extinguished when the porter went to bed. I found some difficulty in removing the bolts, &c. &c. that defended the door, and I could hear Lord Hartly cursing the awkwardness of his man, and reprobating the noise occasioned by it; at length, however, I succeeded, and opening the door, advanced to meet my astonished pupil, who shrunk back the moment he beheld me, and made an effort to return to the coach. Do not, my Lord, said I, add to my sufferings already too long protracted by the thoughtless levity of your conduct this night. My dear Orme, said his Lordship, advancing, forgive me this once, I entreat you; but for heaven's sake, by what miracle did you become acquainted with my folly. A simple accident, my Lord, replied I, revealed your well concerted plan, but we will talk

more

more of this another opportunity; it is time now to take some rest, as our journey to Northington Castle cannot be delayed above a couple of hours longer. We ascended the stairs together; where is that rascal of a Frenchman, said Lord Hartly, entering his room; he shall pay dearly for betraying my secrets, I assure him. Nay, my Lord, said I, if your Lordship makes confidents of such people, you ought not to be displeased if they act conformably to their character; but in this instance I must do him the justice, to exculpate him from all blame; he did not betray your secret. I was witness, from my window, to your Lordship's departure, and coming immediately to your room, obliged Mons. Contoir to give me admission. I held no conversation with your servant, nor asked him any questions whatever, but ordering him to bed,

bed, promised to wait for you myself. I am above the meanness of tampering with any body's servant. I shall think it my duty, however, to acquaint the Duke, your father, with your conduct towards me, and immediately yield up a trust I can no longer acquit myself for retaining. So saying, I took my candle, and retired to my room. I know not what repose his Lordship had, but for my own part I had no interest with the drowsy god, and therefore when Contoir knocked at my door at seven o'clock, to say the breakfast was ready, I was dressed, and equipped for my journey. In the breakfast room, I met Lord Hartly; he looked pale, and dejected, and I perceived had passed his time no pleasanter than I had. He held out his hand to me, and repeated his entreaties to forgive him. I told his Lordship, I could only comply with

with his request on one condition, namely, an unlimited confidence on his part. Well, my dear Orme, said his Lordship, as you are determined to bring me to confession, I hope you will consider my deposit as sacred. Your Lordship knows my sentiments on that head already, replied I, and I leave you to judge whether I may be trusted; but, remember, my Lord, if the secret you have to confide endangers your morals, and you resist my remonstrances with obstinacy, I shall not betray, but I shall leave you; for I will never give my countenance to what my heart disapproves. Enough, enough, my good friend, said Lord Hartly, I am going to throw myself at your mercy; do with me as you please; in the first place, then, I must assure you, that I had no premeditated intention of going to the masquerade when I first went out. My

sole

sole intention was to call upon Horatio Levison, who has been my most intimate friend from the time I was a school-boy, and with whom I have corresponded regularly ever since I left England. There is a kind of family dislike between his father, and mine, but our affection has known no coolness from that consideration. When I called at his house, I found him preparing for a masquerade, given in honour of the Prince, by a private subscription of gentlemen; it was expected to be very superb, and he entreated me to accompany him; tickets were extremely scarce, he said, but fortunately he knew he could procure one for me. I told him my father's injunctions, about not remaining in town, and expressed my fears, lest any body should find out I was there, and inform him of it. Oh! said he, that is impossible, and only think how

how long it may be before we meet again; in short, he can do as he pleases with me, and I yielded to his entreaties. I went immediately, and ordered a white domino from a masquerade warehouse, and returned home to give Contoir the necessary orders. I did not wish you to know a syllable of the matter, as I was sure you would disapprove of my conduct, and perhaps prevent me; besides, I thought it but just, that entire ignorance of the fact should exempt you in future from any particle of the blame, should the affair be known. The coach set me down at Levison's, and he was delighted to see me. I was afraid, said he, old square-toes had smelt a rat, and prevented your coming; but *allons*, said he, or my sister will think I do not intend to go. Your sister, said I. Yes, replied he, my sister Caroline, one of the most lovely girls in England.

England. I mean to introduce you to her Henry, so take care of your heart. Come, said he, my chariot waits; but stay, exclaimed I, you forget I am not to be known. Very true, replied he, I shall call you Mr. Egerton, and as you have been abroad three years, and were but a stripling when you left England, it is impossible you should be known, so come along, and let us have no more scruples. As we rode together, he informed me that his sister had been in England only a fortnight; that she had been finishing her education at Paris, with an aunt, who was Lady Abbess, in an English nunnery there—that she was a most accomplished, elegant girl, and I wish from my soul, added he, that you may both fall in love with each other. She is now at Lady Frampton's, a near relation of my father's, who has introduced her at court, and

is to be her companion to-night; the chairot set us down at Lady Frampton's, where I was introduced to her Ladyship, as Mr. Egerton, a particular friend of Levison's; her Ladyship received me very politely, and seemed better pleased with my appearance, than I felt with hers; she is quite what is called a fashionable *harridan*, with every pretention to youth, without one single mark of its charms; her cheeks were loaded with rouge, which made her thin visage look still more haggard; she was dressed as Flora, with a profusion of flowing locks, and flowery wreaths; her appearance altogether reminded me of a withered oak, adorned with trophies of gaiety, upon some village festival. While I was contemplating this unpleasing spectacle of female absurdity, my attention was most agreeably called off, by the entrance of Miss Levison, the most lovely,

lovely, the most enchanting of women. Vivacity sparkled in her eye, while modesty glowed upon her cheek; her brother taking her hand presented her to me, with these words, my sister Caroline, one of the dearest friends I have—then turning to Miss Levison, this is my other dearest friend, Mr. Egerton, receive him for your brother's sake, now Caroline, you will soon esteem him for his own; the lovely Caroline, curtseying with ineffable grace, assured me that her brother's friends were always welcome to her—how beautiful she looked, and what a contrast to the antiquated, yet juvenile Lady Frampton. Miss Levison was dressed as a wood nymph, with the most elegant simplicity; her habit was calculated to display the innumerable graces of her form; to be brief, I accompanied this sweet enchantress to the masquerade, and had the

inexpressible

inexpressible delight of enjoying her conversation all the evening, and I find myself this morning whole ages gone in love. This, my dear Orme, is the truth, and the whole truth; tell me, can you forgive me? I had listened to Lord Hartly's narrative with infinite pain, and I could not conceal the chagrin I felt at the ill consequences likely to accrue from his imprudent disobedience. I forgive you, my Lord, said I, with all my heart, but I fear you will find more difficulty in forgiving yourself. I know your father too well, to entertain a single hope of his countenancing any intercourse between his son, and the Levisons. His grace has the most fixed antipathy to the whole family; and I heard him express his hopes, when your Lordship was going abroad, that absence would break off the attachment which was formed at College, between Horatio Levison,

Levison, and your Lordship. Banish, therefore, I entreat you, my Lord, all ideas of this bewitching lady, who seems to have made such an impression on your fancy, since it is impossible she should ever be your's, unless you wish to incur your father's malediction. Lord Hartly promised he would do what he could to obey me, and we were once more reconciled.

When we arrived at Northington Castle, nothing could equal the joy of both Lord Hartly's doating parents; they loaded him with caresses, but the first question the Duke asked was, you are sound hearted I hope, my dear boy, for I have picked out a wife for you, the most accomplished, and best tempered young creature that ever existed, and beautiful as an angel? I have brought a heart with me full of duty for the best of father's,

replied Lord Hartly. Enough, my dear boy; I am sure you must like her, if you are not formed of flint. You shall see her to morrow.

The next day a grand entertainment was given, in honour of Lord Hartly's return, and amongst the rest of the splendid company, came the sweet Lady Emily Osborne, only daughter and heiress to the Earl of Arden, with whose amiable brother I had been appointed to go the grand tour, when a cruel malignant fever deprived the world of one of the most promising youths, that ever adorned nobility. The shock was too great for his doating mother, and she followed her beloved son in three months to the tomb. Lord Arden recommended me to the Duke of Northington, and we did not meet from that period until his Lordship came with his beautiful daughter to Northington

ington Castle. We shed tears of mutual regret, at the recollection of the sweet youth, so untimely snatched away; his Lordship graciously condescended to introduce me to Lady Emily; this, my dear child, said his Lordship, was the esteemed friend of your lamented brother; there needs no stronger recommendation to my esteem, my Lord, replied the amiable young lady—I love every body that loved my dear Arthur; consider me amongst your sincere friends, Sir, for the future, added she, addressing herself to me, and it will be my pride to endeavour to deserve your regard, as my much loved brother did. My heart was too full to reply, but by a bow of respectful gratitude. You will easily believe how charmed I was with Lady Emily, particularly as I traced in her beautiful countenance, the most striking resemblance to the sweet

youth I so sincerely regretted. Judge then of my delight, when I found this charming young lady was the person fixed upon by the Duke, to make his son happy. I could perceive that Lord Hartly was struck with the beauty of her figure, and the unaffected sweetness of her manners; ah, who could behold her with indifference! and I waited with impatience, till the hour of retirement came, to enquire what was his Lordship's opinion of his intended bride. He assured me, he thought Lady Emily a lovely woman, and that her manner seemed to indicate an excellent heart; but, added he, with a sigh, I like Miss Levison better. How did I then lament my foolish acquiescence with his wish, to stop in London in our way to Northington Castle; had Lord Hartly seen Lady Emily first, I am persuaded Miss Levison would never have gained

gained any ascendancy over him; however I consoled myself with the knowledge of the unsteadiness natural to his disposition, and hoped time would wear out the impression of so transient an acquaintance. However, I was mistaken, the only instance I ever knew of steadiness in Lord Hartly, was displayed in his fatal attachment to Miss Levison. Notwithstanding this, when the Duke of Northington proposed the match to his son, he made not the least objection; on the contrary, he plied Lady Emily with such warmth, that his good father was convinced she had made the impression he wished upon his son's heart. As Lady Emily herself approved highly of Lord Hartly, the proposals were accepted on both sides, and in a very short time every thing was settled, and the day fixed for the nuptials. As Lord Hartly appeared ex-

tremely impatient to have every thing concluded, I flattered myself his Lordship had forgotten the fascinating Caroline; but going into his dressing room the day before he was married, I found him extended on the sofa, and bathed in tears. Good heaven, exclaimed I, what can this mean; what sudden affliction has befallen your Lordship, to cause this violent grief, at a moment, when perfect happiness seems to await you? You are deceived Orme, said he, grasping my hand, you are deceived. I have imposed upon all the world, but I cannot deceive myself—I am the most wretched creature that ever existed! I am going to marry a rich heiress, a charming woman, and one that I make no doubt will be an excellent wife, but I do not love her; I can love nobody but my adored Caroline! I was thunderstruck. What madness could

tempt

tempt you, my Lord, to impose thus cruelly upon your father, to betray to certain misery, an innocent woman that loves you and fondly imagines you are equally attached to her? Why did you not tell the Duke of this violent attachment, as ill-founded as unconquerable. You are not certain that he would have denied his consent; at least it was but common justice to allow him the chance; it is not even yet too late; far better is it to remove the veil from Lady Emily's eyes before than after the awful ceremony has passed. Hear me, Orme, said his Lordship, in an almost frantic manner, hear me, and be assured that I will perform what I threaten. You pledged your honour to preserve inviolate, the secret I entrusted you with. I reposed confidence in your integrity, let me not be deceived; if you betray me, if you divulge a tittle of what I

have told you, or give a hint that shall lead to the discovery of the state of my heart, my life shall be the forfeit—I will not exist an hour after my disgrace is certain. Terrified at the violence of his manner, I endeavoured to calm him by assurances of fidelity, and when I had succeeded in restoring him to his right reason, I said all I could to convince him of the dreadful consequences that might accrue, both to himself, and Lady Emily, should he persist in his resolution of deceiving her Ladyship. He told me in answer, that it was the strong sense he had of filial duty, which had induced him to comply with his father's wishes, in marrying Lady Emily; that his impatience to have his nuptials concluded, arose from a fear of hearing from or seeing Miss Levison. One look from her sweet eyes, said he, would undo all my schemes of obedience,

obedience, at a glance; but when I am really married, Lady Emily is so truly amiable, that I do not doubt she will win my affections, and render me in time a good husband. When I found all my reasoning on the subject to no purpose, I could only turn to heaven, and implore its interposition in favour of the sweet victim about to be sacrificed at the shrine of duty, and whose winning manners, and unaffected goodness rendered her every day dearer to my heart. To be brief, the nuptials were solemnized with the greatest splendor, and the deluded Emily thought herself a happy bride. Alas! a very few months undeceived her; for when she accompanied her Lord to town, in order to be presented at court, she soon found the little interest she had in his heart; he met his beloved Caroline, who was imprudent enough to encourage his attentions,

and to seem flattered by the cruel preference he shewed her, to his amiable lady; he had the barbarity to confess to Lady Hartly, that he loved Miss Levison, before he knew her Ladyship, and that absence had rather fortified than diminished his affection; and that he insisted, if she feared his displeasure, to avoid it, by courting the society of her rival, whose presence was indispensible, at every entertainment given at Lord Hartly's and whenever Lady Hartly went in public, which was as seldom as possible, she was obliged to take Miss Levison with her.

I got this information from the Duke, who lamented his son's profligacy to me, in the bitterest terms; adding that he had talked to him, and endeavoured to bring him to reason, but without effect; the lovely, suffering Emily, never complained, but bore his

his ill-usage with unrepining fortitude, while her haughty, unfeeling rival, took every opportunity of mortifying and distressing her. At length she returned to the country; and ah! with what pain did I behold the roses fading on her checks, and the faint lustre of her languid eyes; but nothing affected Lord Hartly, who now strenuously avoided all conversation with me; the Duke had made me chaplain at Northington Castle, or I dare say his Lordship would have found some pretext for removing me from his sight. Lady Hartly was now declared pregnant, to the great joy of the Duke, and Duchess, but it was far otherwise to Lord Hartly, who did not attempt to hide his ill-humour. At the latter end of the year his Lordship left Northington Castle, on a visit to Mr. Levison, in Hampshire; and he had the cruelty to say, a day or two before he set

out, I shall soon enjoy the society of a woman, who has vivacity enough to keep me awake, and who is a proof, that beauty and affectation are not always inseparable. I am sure this will be a great relief, after the insipid moments I have spent lately, glancing his eye with ill-nature towards his poor lady; who, unable to suppress her tears, arose and instantly quitted the room. From Mr. Levison's Lord Hartly went to town, without returning to Northington Castle. The Duke and Duchess wanted to persuade Lady Hartly to go to London for her *accouchement*, but she entreated them to indulge in her wish, to remain where she was; to this they reluctantly yeilded. A little before that event took place, I met her ladyship in the garden, she desired to speak with me for a few minutes; I joined her ladyship, and we walked up and down a

terrace

terrace before the eastern door of the Castle. Mr. Orme, said the sweet lady, I have the greatest confidence in your friendship, and I think I may safely entrust you with a request, which the certainty of its being complied with, will give me peace in my last moments. Madam, said I, and I could hardly utter my words, for tears, you may rely upon my faithful performance of whatever you require; but why this dejection? Indeed, my sweet lady, you should not give way to despondency. Ah! my good friend, replied her ladyship, you know not how hard I struggle to support my afflictions with the fortitude I do; but I feel it will soon be all over, and this agitated bosom will find peace; and yet I cannot rejoice at this expected release, for a mother's anxieties forbid me to do so. Yet could I be assured that my infant, if it should be a daughter,

would

would not fall into the merciless power of the cruel woman who has murdered my peace, I think I could close my eyes with serenity, and this is what I had to request of you my worthy friend. I know your sympathizing, tender heart, and to that I recommend my unborn innocent; if it is a boy, you will no doubt be appointed his tutor, but if unfortunately it is a girl, to what misery may she not be exposed in the cruelty of a step mother; let me then entreat you to inform the Duke and Duchess, after my decease, that it was my earnest request, my last entreaty, that my daughter's education might be entrusted to you. Surely Lord Hartly himself does not disregard so sacred a thing, as a dying injunction. I said all I could to console, and enliven the suffering angel, and at the same time solemnly promised, to fulfil her desires,

should

should the melancholy task devolve on me. My reason, said her ladyship, for not speaking on this subject to the good Duke and Duchess, is the fear I feel of alarming and distressing them; but I am satisfied now, my good friend, that you will never forsake my infant, and I shall die contented. The dinner bell ringing, interrupted this mournful, but interesting conversation, which alas, proved the last we ever had together, for about a week afterwards her ladyship was delivered of twins, a boy and a girl, and three days afterwards was seized with a brain fever, from which death alone could relieve her. In less than eight days, she paid the aweful debt we all must pay, to the unspeakable affliction of the Duke and Duchess, who doated upon her. Thus died, in the twenty-fourth year of her age, Emily Marchioness of Hartly, leaving few ladies

that

that could equal, and none that could excel her. As soon as their first grief was over, I imparted her ladyship's last request to the Duke and Duchess, and they sanctioned it by their approbation, and installing me superintendant of the future education of both the lovely offspring of the unfortunate Emily. Lord Hartly received the news of his lady's death with some degree of remorse, but it soon wore off, and about nine months after that sad event, he married his favourite Miss Levison, the present Duchess of Northington. This match, so much against their wishes, afflicted the Duke and Duchess so sensibly, that I really believe it shortened their days, for they did not survive it above a year and a half; both dying within six weeks of each other, to the no small delight of the present Duchess, whose ambition was much gratified by so noble

noble a title. The Duke soon found the difference between his first and second wife; for never was a more imperious creature seen, than his beloved Caroline, and she had so completely subjugated his will to hers, that he soon ceased to make the least effort of resistance to her most ridiculous fantasies; ever since the fatal period in which he espoused her, he has been degenerating, so that his grace is now become a mere automaton, with scarce a vestige of manly spirit left. I pursued my plans without interruption, for six years, with the dear children committed to my care; but at the end of that time, the Duchess insisted that Lord Hartly should be sent to school; as to the girl, she said, she cared not what became of her, for she supposed she would be mad, like her mother, alluding to the brain fever that deprived

prived us of that best of women. The ridiculous request of the old parson's educating her might be therefore complied with, upon conditions she had apartments assigned her in the Castle, and kept to them, for she was determined there should be no intercourse between Emily, and her daughter, the present Lady Caroline, who was born about a year after the Duke's second marriage. Thus I brought up my sweet pupil, with the assistance of a worthy governess, in the most profound retirement, and saw every virtue budding in her heart, without a single vice to be repressed. Always accustomed to receive a father's care from me, she loved me with the affection of a daughter, and it was her delight to prevent my very wishes, by her obedience to every duty I enforced. When she was about sixteen, we had the misfortune to lose Mrs. Stuart, the worthy governess

governess I spoke of. I applied to the Duchess to appoint some proper person in her place, but was informed it was not necessary. Just at this time, the Duchess came down to Northington Castle; Lady Caroline was not with her, nor the Duke; her grace came to Lady Emily's apartment, and desired to see her; my sweet pupil came, and taking her hand with inexpressible grace, kissed it; the Duchess ungenerously withdrew it, and looking sternly at her, exclaimed, good heavens how wild the girl looks, she will certainly be as mad as her mother. My poor ward was terrified, and began to weep; at this the Duchess took no notice, but told her as she left the room, that she should dine with her to day, and bid her get ready. Never was any terror equal to poor Lady Emily's, at the idea of being alone with her mother in law,

for

for I never dined with the Duchess, unless the Duke was there. I did all I could to comfort her, and sent her into the dining parlour in tolerable spirits; but good heavens, in what a state did she return to me in the evening. The servant had no sooner escorted her into the room, where I was, and retired, than she threw herself into my arms, and weeping as if her little heart would break, was unable to utter a syllable; at length she exclaimed, wringing her hands, oh, my dear, dear, Mr. Orme, my dear father, the cruel Duchess is going to tear me from you, and what then can become of the wretched Emily. Where are they going to send you, my sweet love, said I; you are alarmed without a cause, I hope. No, no, replied she, weeping, I am to be sent to France; the Duke has consented to it, and the Duchess had me to dine with her only to

tell

tell me so. I assured Lady Emily, that if she was sent to the farthest part of the globe, I would never forsake her, and did every thing in my power to console her, but in vain; the terror had seized her spirits, and in the middle of the night, I was awakened by her attendant, who with looks of terror, entreated me to send for the doctor, for Lady Emily was raving mad. Why do you use that shocking expression, said I; the poor young lady may be light-headed, but I am sure she cannot be mad. I arose and dressed myself, with all possible dispatch, and sending express for the nearest medical assistance, I went to the bedside of my soul's darling, who I found in a high fever, and delirium. Continually calling upon me, and her dear governness, to save her, for the Duchess was going to send her to France, to be murdered. When the

doctor

doctor came, he gave but little hopes of her recovery; and six anxious nights and days I passed by her bedside, and in the adjoining apartment, sometimes imploring heaven to spare her, and at others entreating the Almighty to take the suffering angel to himself, and release her from this vale of misery and tears. At length, it pleased his divine wisdom to give a favourable turn to her disorder, and youth, and a good constitution, enabled her to recover; but her recovery was very slow, and I often dreaded a relapse, for the least hurry of spirits gave a wildness to her looks, that filled me with apprehensions; but praised be God's goodness, that evil did not befall us, for her ladyship had not the least symptom of delirium afterwards, though her artful attendant, who was a creature of the Duchess's, reported it every where, that the poor young lady was quite

melancholy

melancholy mad, and never could recover her senses again. This wicked falsehood was confirmed by the doctor, who no doubt received a handsome reward for his wickedness. The Duke seemed perfectly convinced of the truth of it; and when I attempted to speak to his grace on the subject, he desired I would never touch again upon so delicate a point, as he must decline hearing any thing relating to it. The Duchess's art in propagating this report, is inconceivable; not a creature that knows Lady Emily exists, and there are many, that do not know she survived her infancy, entertain a doubt of the truth of her being insane; even Lord Hartly believes it, and the Duchess has taken care, that I should never have any access to his Lordship, to convince him to the contrary. As soon as my poor ward was sufficiently recovered,

the

the French scheme was put into execution, and I was obliged to attend her to a convent, at Avignon, and place her there, as a boarder. I staid two or three months in the neighbourhood, till my dear child was reconciled to her abode, and a little acquainted with her companions; the natural goodness of heart, soon made her many friends. She supported her fate with more resignation than I expected; our parting was a dreadful one. I will pass it over, for I cannot bear, even now, the recollection of it.

I stipulated with the Abbess for an uninterrupted correspondence with Lady Emily; insisting, that although it was their indispensible rule, to read all letters that came to the convent, no animadversions whatever should be made upon the contents of those I should send, assuring her that I should

should write with the same freedom as if no eye but Lady Emily's was to read them. I found afterwards, that I need not have been so apprehensive. The Lady Abbess of St. Frances was a most liberal minded woman, and treated my dear child with the tenderness of a mother. When I returned to England, I found the Duke and Duchess at Northington Castle, but not a question was asked by either, relating to the unfortunate young creature I had left behind. I received every half year, from the Duke's agent, the sum necessary for paying for Lady Emily's board, cloaths, &c. &c. and, I must say, that the allowance was very liberal. When my poor child had been with the nuns of St. Frances about two years the proscription of convents took place, and I received a most pressing letter

from the Lady Abbess, entreating me to lose no time in fetching away the amiable young lady placed under her care, as she could not answer how long she might remain with her in safety; the reluctance, added she, with which I part with this sweet girl, makes me scarce able to believe that any parents can be so blind to their own happiness, as willingly to forego the charming society of this best of children. I communicated this letter to the Duke; he seemed moved with the contents, but immediately shewed it to the Duchess, who ill naturedly said, that she saw no reason for such a pressing alarm; that it was almost impossible for any body to go over to France at such a period; that there was great risk in it, and that as the Lady Abbess must seek for some safe asylum for herself, she had better be

requested

requested to take Emily with her, as she thought the bringing her to England would be attended with infinite trouble and expense. As to the danger incurred by the individual employed in fetching Lady Emily, said I, if I am so happy as to be appointed to that office, I shall most willingly undertake it—I am ready to set out this instant, if your grace approves of it. Oh! I never entertained a doubt of your Quixotism, Mr. Orme, when your favourite is concerned, said the Duchess with a sneer. I believe you are a little touched as well as Emily, and you know the old adage, "if the blind leads the blind," so I think if she must be sent for, La Fite had better be the person that fetches her, turning to the Duke, your grace knows he, being perfect master of the language, the customs, and

roads, in France, must be a more eligible envoy, in a time of danger, than a man that has passed nearly all his life in a library. I am sure Madam, replied I with warmth, nothing could be more improper than the trusting a daughter of the Duke of Northington's with a man like La Fite, and without a female attendant, or any other escort. I must tell your grace, that I think the proposal could never have been made but by a heart bereft of every feeling of humanity, every sentiment of female delicacy. The Duchess reddened with resentment, and bit her lips in silence. To you, my Lord, said I, I now address myself for a final answer; does your grace intend to abandon your innocent, and lovely child, and renouncing the sacred right of a father, turn her over to the bitter malice,

and

and unprovoked cruelty of a hard-hearted step mother; if such is your intention, I will immediately apply to the Lord Chancellor and demand his protection for oppressed innocence. The story I can tell will cover you with shame and opprobium, if all sense of propriety did not expire with parental affection. The Duke looked at the Duchess as if for her instructions, but she kept a disdainful silence; at length he said, I think Orme may as well fetch poor Emily, my dear Caroline; as he does not mind the danger, I am sure I do not care for the expense; so set off as soon as you please, Orme, the sooner the better—do not you think so, Caroline? Oh! to be sure, and if he and Emily are both lost, it will not be of much consequence, said the Duchess. Your grace has brought things

to a fine pass, when you suffer an impertinent, paltry dependant parson to threaten you. So saying, she flirted out of the room, and when she was gone the Duke said, you are too severe Orme, I love poor Emily with all my heart, and am sorry for the unfortunate circumstance that cuts her off from society; take the best care you can of her, and have as much money as you please of Mr. Bennett; but do be a little more upon your guard before the Duchess, these high airs only exasperate her against the poor child, and you see she is more master than I am. I arranged every thing for my departure with such dispatch, that I was ready to set out in a very few days. I took London in my way, and was advised by a friend of mine, to go in an American vessel that was to sail from —— for Marseilles

seilles in a few days, and to pass myself for an American. By following his advice I had the good fortune to meet with your Lordship, and through you and Mr. Travers's kind friendship was enabled to save my darling from the paws of the lion. Your Lordship knows all that happened till we parted at Genoa, from which place we went to Leghorn, and came on board a Swedish vessel to England, after suffering many inconveniencies in our voyage. When we came to Northington Castle, I entreated the Duke to see his daughter, but he refused, and the Duchess had the cruelty to make Lady Emily's confinement more strict, forbidding, on pain of being quite shut up, to be seen by any body at the castle, except her own attendants, and Miss Evelyn, who just then came to live

with Lady Caroline, as her companion; but whose chief employment was to see that poor Lady Emily did not over step the bounds prescribed to her. So that when the family are at the Castle, Lady Emily is nearly confined to her chamber, not even allowed to take a walk, except she does it early in the morning, before the family are stirring. Heaven has been kind to Lady Emily, in giving her so mild a jailor, for Miss Evelyn is benevolence itself; and when the grand doings were first talked of on Lady Caroline's coming of age, her kind heart first suggested the idea of Lady Emily's visiting the masquerade; by her management the scheme was put in execution, as your Lordship knows. I have nothing more to add, except that I have written to

Lord

Lord Hartly on the subject of his sister's unjust confinement, and have received the most affectionate answer possible, with a promise to investigate the matter thoroughly on his return to England, which his Lordship expects will be the middle of next month. Heaven give a blessing to the pious undertakings, and to this I know your Lordship will heartily say, amen.

LETTER VIII.

Mrs. Parker to Mrs. Mordant.

HONOURED MADAM,

IT is with great pain I am obliged to inform you, that my worthy lady, Mrs. Lenox is dangerously ill; poor dear Miss Lenox is unable to hold a pen, besides she does not quit her dear mother's bedside for ten minutes at a time, the whole twenty-four hours. I am afraid she will lay herself up, between fretting and taking no nourishment. I know, Madam, you will come here as soon as you are acquainted with this melancholy news—for certainly nothing

nothing could be more welcome, than a visit from you, just at this sad period; it would do Mrs. Lenox good to see you, and perhaps you could persuade poor Miss Louisa to take a bit of something now and then, for I am certain sure she will be soon as bad as my lady, if she goes on as she does now much longer; and there are some other things that ought to be looked into, that I will tell you about when you come. I am afraid all is not right—Mrs. Dudly is here—God forgive me, but I do not like that lady; I am afraid she is what is called double deceitful. She makes a great fuss with poor Miss Louisa, but I do not think she likes her at the bottom. My poor lady's complaint is a bilious fever—she was taken ill the next day after she returned from Northington Castle. But she would not let me send for Miss Louisa;

she said she should soon be better—but dear me, she got worse and worse, and when the poor dear young lady came home, she found Mrs. Lenox in bed, very bad, and attended by two physicians. This was a terrible blow to the sweet lady's affectionate heart—and what made it worse was, Mrs. Dudly said as soon as she saw her, so Miss Louisa, while you have been spending your time in mirth and gaiety, your good friend and kind benefactress has been dying. Dear heart, how the poor little thing did take on. She could make no answer, but left the room sobbing as if her heart would break. Well, but I will not trouble you, Madam, with any more particulars at present, but keep them till you come; but I repeat again, all is not right, something is brewing I am sure. Pray, Madam, make no delay, for your presence

may

may do much. Dr. Campbell who has known my lady's constitution for many years, told me to-day, he had no hopes of her recovery.

I am, honoured Madam,

Your servant to command,

JANE PARKER.

This goes express.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

Mrs. Mordant to Mrs. Parker.

GOOD MRS. PARKER,

YOU will think what distress I must feel at receiving your sad intelligence, when I acquaint you that I am in my bed, with so violent a fit of the gout, as to be wholly unable to be moved; it is with the greatest difficulty I hold my pen, to reply to your letter; two days ago I could not have done it, but thank God the complaint is got more into my feet now. You judged well, in supposing that I would have immediately set out for Lenox Abbey, had it not been for

for my unfortunate confinement, doubly irksome to me at this moment of affliction. Mrs. Lenox is the friend of my youth, the loved companion of my whole life; if I lose her, there is nothing in this world can fill up the chasm. My heart bleeds for my lovely child, my dear Louisa; I hope Mrs. Lenox has taken care of her. I know Mrs. Dudly too well, to wish Louisa to fall into her hands. Mrs. Lenox always assured me, that Miss Lenox should be her heiress. Do my good Mrs. Parker, endeavour to find out whether my worthy friend has made her will. Mr. Dobson can inform you; if you find she has not, watch for an opportunity and remind the good lady of it. I know her heart too well, to fear she will be offended with you. She was going to perform that necessary duty sometime ago, and Mrs. Dudly persuaded her to defer

fer it. Heaven grant it may have been done since. You know, Mrs. Dudly is the late General Lenox's sister, and her son Augustus Dudly is heir at law to all the Lenox estates, which are entailed; but there are two large estates at Mrs. Lenox's disposal, and which the General himself wished our beloved Louisa to inherit; however if my good friend dies without a will, they will fall to Augustus, or his mother, I do not know which. Mrs. Lenox is so persuaded that the Dudlys doat upon Louisa, that perhaps it has made her careless upon this weighty concern; but I am of your opinion, for I think Mrs. Dudly has always looked upon Louisa with a jealous eye, and only countenanced the match with her son, as a means of insuring the possession of the family estates. The young man I believe is sincere enough, but how fickle are

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the best of his sex! Pray write to me every other day, and send it express; I will pay the expense cheerfully, for my anxiety and distress on this melancholy occasion, are almost insupportable.

Good Mrs. Parker,

Your's &c.

E. MORDANT.

LETTER

LETTER X.

Mrs. Parker to Mrs. Mordant.

THURSDAY MORNING,

10 O'CLOCK.

HONOURED MADAM,

MY poor lady continues getting worse; and all the doctors agree that she cannot recover. I could not go, but I wrote a few lines to enquire of Mr. Dobson as you desired, concerning the will, but alas! I had my note returned unopened, for I had directed it to be delivered only to himself, lest his clerk should see it, and was informed that the good gentleman was

gone

gone to the Madeiras for his health, and had been set out above three weeks ago. How very unlucky a circumstance—almost as bad as your sad confinement, which I lament for every reason, Madam. Poor Miss Louisa cried sadly, when she heard you was ill. Oh! she is the best young lady that ever lived—so patient—so attentive to Mrs. Lenox—and she poor lady, though she is mostly lightheaded, is always best pleased to take every thing out of Miss Lenox's hand. And, somehow or other, whenever Mrs. Dudly comes into the room, my poor lady is so ruffled, that her delirium grows worse. I told Mrs. Dudly so, and she almost snapped my head off, and told me not to be so very officious.

THURSDAY EVENING.

I was called away this morning, and forced to leave off abruptly. My lady had fainted, and laid so long insensible, that every one present concluded she was dead, and poor Miss Louisa was carried out of the room, nearly as lifeless as herself; however, Mrs. Lenox came to herself again, and the delirium has left her; the first thing she asked for was her dear Louisa; I told her, that terrified at seeing her faint, she had been too much affected to stay in the room. Then go Parker, said the good lady, and re-assure my darling girl—yet stay—do not vainly flatter her—this calm will not last long, I am sure I cannot live many hours; I wish I could speak to Mr. Dobson for a few minutes; do

do send for him Parker. I was just going to tell my lady that Mr. Dobson was gone abroad for his health, and ask if any body else would do, when in bounced Mrs. Dudly like a fury. She had caught my lady's last words, and did not give me time to reply, but exclaimed, what are you doing Parker? How dare you to be so officious, you are disturbing my sister when you see she is dying; I will have nobody sent for, this is no time for will making. Mrs. Lenox looked earnestly at her sister, and said faintly it is done—it is all settled; pray sister be kind to my Louisa, and soothe, and console her under the affliction that awaits her; but I know you will; let me see her once more while I have sense to know her. I went and fetched my dear young lady, who was more dead than alive. Mrs. Lenox pressed her to her bosom,

bosom, and kissed her, and said be comforted my love, I have amply provided for you in this world, and the innate goodness of your heart will make you careful to provide for the next yourself. You see how suddenly we are called away, and how little time or power we have to alter, or amend what is already done, when sickness seizes us; let it console you to recollect, that the friend you are so anxious about, and whom you so kindly lament, did not leave that needful task to the last aweful moment. No my Louisa, my soul is calm, and I can meet death with humble hope, and an undoubting confidence in the goodness of my creator; be assured too, my love, that your affectionate attention and tender care has sweetened my life, and soothed me in the hour of death, and may my merciful God impart a portion of that peace to my child,

which

which now comforts, and supports my own heart. Having said this, the good lady sunk back on her pillow quite exhausted, and we thought she had fainted, but it was not so, for we presently found that she was only dozing; in that state she has been ever since, and that is nearly five hours; the physicians think it probable that she will go off in this slumber. I am now writing in her room, not far from the bed in which my beloved mistress is. Mrs. Dudly is below stairs, engaged with her attorney, Mr. Simson; who has been in the house all day, for what purpose I know not. He is a man not at all respected, as he is known to have undertaken many vile things in the course of his business. I am afraid he suits Mrs. Dudly the better for that. I am so sorry poor Mr. Dobson is not in England, for he is a good man, and would have

taken

taken care poor Miss Louisa was righted; but this man looks as if he could eat lamb like a wolf. Oh! Madam, I am sadly distressed; my fears are too much for me at times: that dear sweet young lady is gone, at my persuasion, to lay down in the next room. Pretty creature, I crept in just now, and stole a look at her; she is fast asleep; fatigue and grief will kill her I am afraid. Oh! dear how pale she looks; and she starts and moans in her sleep as if her dreams were terrifying. I wish Mr. Augustus was here, he is a noble generous young gentleman, and I am sure he loves Miss Louisa, and if he was to see her now, he would love her better than ever, for all her faded looks. It is impossible to describe the love and tender anxiety expressed in her beautiful countenance—it seems as if, as her bodily charms decayed

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the beauties of her soul appeared the plainer; for I think I never saw her look so pretty as she does now, with her pale cheeks, and eyes full of tears; perhaps it is the tender pity I feel for her makes me fonder of her than ever. I will fold up this letter, and put it into my bosom, for fear of a surprise, and before I seal and send it off to-morrow morning, will give you the latest account of my dear lady's situation,

I am, Madam,

Your respectful humble servant,

JANE PARKER.

FRIDAY MORNING, SIX O'CLOCK.

Ah! Madam, it is all over, your dear, good friend is an angel in Heaven. Alas!

alas! I am unequal to saying any thing upon the subject at present, only that my lamented mistress awoke out of her slumber about twelve o'clock last night, and I had only time to call my dear Miss Louisa to her bedside, before she breathed her last. She never uttered a syllable, or a groan, but laying her head upon the bosom of her weeping child, and looking in her face with a sweet smile, closed her eyes for ever. Neither Miss Louisa nor I had power to stir or speak, but the nurse, who was a less concerned spectator of the awful scene, went down to Mrs. Dudly, and informed her of the sad event. She came immediately up stairs, and Mr. Simson with her, unfeeling woman, that she is, my blood curdles while I think upon her, they both advanced to the bed; the wretch of a lawyer had the audacity to take my lady's hand

hand that was still fast locked in mine. Yes, said the monster, she is dead enough, let every thing be immediately sealed up, and every key given to Mrs. Dudly. Are you not afraid Sir, said I, to touch the sacred dead, while the departed spirit is still hovering over it, with such mercenary thoughts in your head? Woman, replied he with a sneer, your day is over, so do not be pert, but obey the orders of your present mistress, to whose mercy you now fall. Mrs. Lenox was so indulgent, and gave you all such liberties, that you do not know yourselves; but we must take every precaution for the security of her property to her rightful heir Mr. Augustus Dudly. He then proceeded to seal every cabinet, drawer, &c. &c. in the room while my poor young lady sat overcome with grief and seemingly unconscious of the scene that was

passing before her. When Mrs. Dudly and Mr. Simson had left the room, I conveyed poor Miss Louisa to her own apartment, and persuaded her to go to bed, where I left her that I might assist the nurse in the last sad offices, to my dear departed lady. Ah! Madam, my heart is sore afflicted, and it grieves me to think what sorrow my letter will convey to your's. I shall take the liberty of continuing my writing daily, till my sweet young lady is able to write; I am sure you will be anxious about her. Once more, honoured Madam, farewell.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

Mrs. Dudly to Augustus Dudly, Esq.

MY DEAR SON,

I AM sorry to inform you of your aunt Lenox's death, which happened yesterday morning; however, thank God, the loss is not without consolation; the acquisition of so fine a fortune as now falls to you, is a circumstance not to be overlooked, and we must not repine at an event which was irresistible, some time or other. I believe, poor woman, her end was hastened by the ingratitude of Louisa. I am concerned to be obliged to expose her, but when I think of your happiness being at stake, I cannot

hesitate about it. Though I flatter myself you have too much good sense to waste a thought upon so worthless a subject, when once you know all. I was deceived by her speciousness, as well as Mrs. Lenox, till your absence throwing her off her guard, gave me an insight into her real character. She has art far beyond her years, and acts her part with an appearance of reality, that would do honour to a Siddons; it is a most happy circumstance that you had not married this insinuating girl before I had acquired a perfect knowledge of her disposition. I tremble to think of the escape you have had—would you believe it Augustus, that notwithstanding her vows of fidelity to you, and all her professions of affection for Mrs. Lenox, notwithstanding all this, I say, would you believe, that she staid coquetting with her new favourite, Sir

Henry

Henry Paget, at Northington Castle, till poor Mrs. Lenox was given over by her physicians, and then could hardly be persuaded to change scenes of revelry and mirth, for the dull confines of a sick chamber; but she will suffer severely for it; her friend has left her nothing—a terrible blow for such puffed up pride; nothing has she now to depend upon, but the fifty pounds per annum which my generous, but mistaken brother settled on his foundling; whether she was his own or no, heaven only knows. I have often thought the story of the field of battle was a mere fabrication to keep my sister from being jealous, but that can never be unravelled now. I have reason to think Mrs. Lenox made a will greatly in Louisa's favour, at the time she thought worthily of her, and while that romantic scheme of a marriage between you and

this highly exalted favourite was in agitation. But she certainly destroyed it when she was convinced of her ingratitude, for there is none to be found. I have enquired of Mr. Dobson's clerks, he is abroad on account of his health, but they know nothing of the matter. I employ the worthy Mr. Simpson in all your affairs, and make no doubt what he does will meet with your approbation at your return, which I hope will be shortly, though I can easily excuse a longer stay, provided the attraction of either of your cousins should be the occasion of it. Indeed Augustus, it would give me the highest satisfaction, if an alliance could be formed between that family and ours; the ladies are noble, and rich, and I am told both handsome. I shall have a poor opinion of your gallantry, if you profess indifference after passing so many

months

months in such society. As to the worthless girl that once attracted you, she is beneath your notice in every respect now, and the kindest thing you can do for her, is to let her return to her original obscurity, from which my good brother so improperly exalted her. God bless you, my dear son, I flatter myself you will not slight an opportunity of obliging,

Your affectionate mother,

PENELOPE DUDLY.

LETTER XII.

Mrs. Parker to Mrs. Mordant.

SUNDAY.

HONOURED MADAM,

EVERY thing I dreaded is come to pass. My poor young lady is left unprovided for, and friendless in the world; but I should not have said friendless, while you live, Madam, I had forgotten myself, and humbly beg your pardon; for I am sure you will never forsake her, let who will prove unkind; but what I meant was, that Mrs. Dudly has begun to shew her cloven foot betimes, and that Miss Louisa has nothing

to

to expect from this family. I will tell you every thing as it happened, in rotation, and you will judge then what hands my poor dear young lady is fallen into. All day yesterday was spent in searching, as they said, for a will, but God forgive me if I judge them wrongfully, I verily believe they burnt one, for they threw some parchment which was in my lady's cabinet, into the fire, and which had exactly the appearance of such a thing. I was in the room when they did it, but they did not know it, for I had stolen in to take a look of my poor lady, just before they entered; and as I thought Mrs. Dudly would speak very snappish to me, I stood close behind the curtain, and as the bed is in an alcove they could not see me. Mr. Simson and Mrs. Dudly were talking very low, and I could not distinguish more than a word here and there. Mrs. Dudly

opened my lady's cabinet; this is it, said Mr. Simson, taking hold of the parchment I spoke of, and Mrs. Dudly said, are you sure. Yes, yes, said the vile man, and then he mumbled something, I cannot tell what, but Mrs. Dudly replied, certainly, the sooner the better; and then she said something about a copy, and he said, no, no, Madam, not likely at all; they then locked the cabinet, and sealed it again, with a wax taper Mrs. Dudly had in her hand. Mr. Simson said, we can burn it here; not in this room, replied Mrs. Dudly, and seemed all in a tremble. Yes, yes, with your taper, Madam, replied the wicked man, and taking it out of her hand, he went up to the grate, the fire was laid, not lit, and set fire to the parchment, with the taper, and watched it till it was quite burnt, and I could hear Mrs. Dudly say, take care

you

you do not set fire to the coals, or it will betray us. Leave me alone, said the wicked one, I am used to such things. I cannot describe what I felt, Madam, while this scene of iniquity was acting before me; a kind of cold numbness seized me, as if I was turning to stone, and I had not the power to move or utter a syllable. When they shut the door, and were gone out, a convulsive shriek escaped me, which made them both return with horror in their looks. There was nobody in the room I am sure, said Mrs. Dudly; then from whence could that noise proceed? From your fancy Madam, replied Mr. Simpson, that alarms itself without a cause; what we have been doing is only an act of common justice, then why these groundless terrors? I am sure I heard it, said Mrs. Dudly, trembling; and yet the dead cannot

not be sensible of our actions; this mystery is dreadful. She came to the foot of the bed, and cast a fearful glance at my poor lady, and then withdrew with her wicked companion, who vainly endeavoured to laugh away her apprehensions. As soon as I was certain they were gone, I stole out unperceived, and acquainted Miss Louisa with the transaction I had been witness to; but poor young lady, she is insensible to every thing but the loss of her dear mother, and paid but little attention to what I said. She is in her own room, which she has never quitted since the fatal event, and takes on sadly, poor thing. This morning Mrs. Dudly sent for me into the drawing room, and said, I find Mrs. Parker that your lady has died without a will, and therefore I must take upon me to act for my son, in his absence, who is her heir at law.

law. I shall give you all mourning, and Louisa amongst the rest, for I am sure my son would wish to do what is proper. I have fixed upon next Thursday for the funeral. I request you to take care that all the maid servants mourning is ready by that time. I know you are prudent, and therefore trust you to get what is proper; where is Louisa now? Miss Lenox is in her own room, Madam, replied I, she is too ill to leave it. You had better send for the apothecary then, said Mrs. Dudly; but I beg, for the future, you will drop that ridiculous custom of calling Louisa Miss Lenox; she has no title whatever to that name; Weltzden is her surname, and by that I desire she may be called in future. My good lady always desired me to call Miss Louisa by the name of Lenox, Madam, answered I. That is nothing at

all

all to the purpose, Mrs. Parker, said Mrs. Dudly. I am to order now, and I expect to be obeyed; and one word more, Mrs. Parker, I desire, that in ordering Louisa's mourning, you will recollect she is going to live in a very different style from what she has done, and that expensive dress will be extremely unbecoming. My heart was so full, that I thought verily it would burst, and I could not help saying, poor Miss Louisa, you have indeed lost your friend! Mrs. Parker, said Mrs. Dudly, I desire I may have no more of your remarks. Your observations will neither avail yourself, nor your friend. I left the room and went to my own, for I had not heart to acquaint that sweet suffering angel with Mrs. Dudly's cruelty, in classing her with the servants. Surely, Madam, when Mr. Dudly returns he will be very angry with his mother, for using

using Miss Louisa so; but if he should be false hearted, oh, lack aday, that will quite break her heart at once, for she loves him as she does her own soul, that I am certain sure of. Poor thing, she was wishing yesterday to hear from him; it is so long said she, since I heard from Augustus, that I am afraid he is ill; but his mother appears easy, and so ought I to be; but this mournful and sudden loss will alarm me for the safety of all my absent friends. Ah! poor young lady, I am afraid his mother will not allow him to speak to her when he comes back, for Mrs. Elliot, Mrs. Dudly's woman, was saying at dinner to-day, that Mr. Augustus was paying his addresses to Miss Dudly, his cousin, in Ireland, and that it was thought it would soon be a match. Then, says I, Mr. Augustus is forsworn, and no good will befall him, for

he

he is engaged to Miss Louisa Lenox, as solemnly as if they were married. My lady has desired that nobody will call that young woman Lenox any more, and I wonder Mrs. Parker you so soon forget her commands, said Mrs. Elliot. Mr. Augustus is not such a fool to be sure, to stoop down so low for a wife, when he can marry a lady as grand as himself, with a great fortune.

I am sure, Madam, you will be greatly hurt at hearing this cruel treatment of your dear young favourite; if it is so bad now, before my dear lady's remains are removed out of the house, what has she not to expect afterwards.

I told Miss Lenox I was writing to you, Madam, and she desired me to give her affectionate

affectionate love to you, and assure you, that she will write as soon as she is able, and oh, beg my dear Mrs. Mordant, added she, to write to me; indeed, Madam, my heart bleeds to see Miss Louisa's distress, and more so, as I know worse awaits her, for I have not had courage to tell her all Mrs. Dudly's vileness yet.

Believe me, honoured Madam,

Your humble servant,

J. PARKER.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

Mrs. Mordant to Miss Lenox.

MY DEAREST LOUISA,

I WOULD wish to say every thing to you, expressive of the tenderest affection, the most sympathising friendship, but I am afraid my letter will convey but a faint picture of the warm sentiments I bear you, as the cruel gout still continues to torture me, and render me more unfit for writing than any thing else; but be assured, my dear love, that nothing has power to alter the affection I have always felt for you, and which is augmented, if an increase was possible,

possible, by the affliction that now oppresses you. I know your patient disposition, and am therefore sure you submit with becoming resignation to the will of God, in this severe visitation sent for some wise end, no doubt, though we poor blind mortals are unable to fathom the depth of his unsearchable ways. From Mrs Parker's account of some circumstances, I am afraid there have been some unfair things practised against you, and that loss of fortune is added to the heavy affliction of losing your friend; but cheer up my love, while innocence is your companion you are still in a more enviable situation than your cruel enemies can ever be, and may look down with compassion upon the horrors of their guilty consciences. Do not stay any longer at Lenox Abbey, after our worthy friend's funeral, than is just necessary to pack up your

your cloaths, &c. &c. for I cannot bear the thoughts of your being exposed to the insults of that unfeeling woman, Mrs. Dudly. Come, my Louisa, to your affectionate friend, and both receive and give consolation. I shall count the moment's till I embrace you. I have not that ample fortune to offer you, which your late friend had, but my affection for you will yield to none. My income is chiefly jointure, but I have been a good economist, and the few hundreds I have at my disposal have long ago been settled upon you, my love, by will. I knew how uncertain were the smiles of fortune, and was well persuaded, that if you never wanted the small addition, it was in my power to make to your income, your generous heart was the fittest agent I could fix on to dispose of it to the sons and daughters of misfortune, whose situations

rendered

rendered them worthy objects of benevolence. Come then, my dear girl, and become a real daughter to me, and fear not but you will find a fondly affectionate mother, in

Your sincere friend,

E. MORDANT.

P. S. I hope Mrs. Parker will be able to accompany you hither. My worthy servant, Ellen, is on the point of marriage. I can therefore afford to make Mrs. Parker's place worth her acceptance, without infringing on my rules of economy.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

Miss Lenox to Mrs. Mordant.

IT is proper that I should make the first offering of my pen to my best friend. Ah! dearest Madam, what have I not endured since I last addressed you, and how poignantly do I lament my fatal compliance with my loved benefactress's desire, that I should remain at Northington Castle after her departure, and yet, had I not been used to consider the least command of her's as a law. Accustomed to implicit obedience, I knew not how to refuse her any thing, and therefore yielded against my better judgment, and the dictates of my anxious affectio-

affection. Had I been with her at the beginning of her illness, perhaps—but no—I am presumptuous in supposing that any feeble effort of mine could have reversed the decrees of Providence, and staid the inevitable blow; a blow so heavy, that my poor heart is stunned as it were with the force of it. You must pardon me if you find my letter incoherent or unconnected—my ideas are as yet in a confused state—the suddenness of this misfortune, and its falling upon me just as my mind had been relaxed, by an unusual participation of mirth and festivity, has armed it with redoubled force; and I feel the most grateful sense of the mercy of God, whose correcting hand now lays heavy upon me, that he has enabled my reason to preserve its seat, unshaken amidst the terrors that have surrounded me. Mrs. Dudly's cruelty is

a severe addition to my sufferings; alas! I am unconscious of ever having given her cause of offence; and yet, she not only withdraws her protection from me, but endeavours to load me with calumny; by telling every body, that my ingratitude to the dear friend I have lost, irritated her against me in her last moments, and deprived me of the provision which had been promised. This unjust slander would break my heart, did not my innocence support me. From the time I returned from the Duke of Northington's, until death deprived me of my beloved mother, I never quitted her bed-side, but when obliged by the worthy Mrs. Parker to take a little rest, without which, she assured me I could not exist. My dear Mrs. Lenox took every medicine from my hands, and whenever she enjoyed an interval of sense, how tender

were

were her expressions; but a few hours before her death, she assured me she had amply provided for me in this world, and warned me not to neglect providing for the next myself; even at the last moment she raised her dear head from her pillow, and laying it on my bosom, expired in my arms. Did that look like resentment? Blest spirit! if thou art still conscious of the existence of thy once loved Louisa, oh, look down with pity, and sooth with heavenly comfort, her agonised bosom—behold her, not only slighted by the friend to whose care thy kind solicitude so tenderly recommended her, but her sad bosom peirced by the keen shaft of calumny, when weeping the death of her beloved benefactress—her parent—her guide! Oh! my dear Mrs. Mordant, you will not wonder that I look upon the loss of fortune with

frigid indifference, absorbed as I am in the deep anguish of a wounded reputation. Last night, amidst all the pomp of funeral solemnity, nodding plumes, waving escutcheons, and the sad glare of sepulchral torches, the dark tomb received the precious remains of one of the best of women! Clad in the sable weeds of woe, the forlorn Louisa followed her beloved parent to the grave. And ah! how ardently did she wish the cold vault would receive her too, and kindly shelter her from the oppressive cruelty of an unfeeling world! You will wonder, my dear Mrs. Mordant, that such deep grief as mine should choose to expose its exquisite sufferings to the gaze of the curious; but, my dear Madam, I had received an absolute command to attend the obsequies of my departed friend. Mrs. Dudly sent her woman with a verbal mes-

sage

sage to me yesterday morning, desiring that I would be ready by eight o'clock in the evening, to go with the rest of the upper servants to Mrs. Lenox's funeral. Tell Mrs. Dudly, said I, that in whatever rank of life she may choose to class me, my respect for the memory of her departed sister is incapable of abatement; that, as a testimony of that respect, I will attend her remains, though very unfit for such a trying scene. I dare say, Miss, replied the unfeeling woman, I shall not remember half that fine speech; but I shall tell my lady that you will be ready to go, and that is the short and the long of it. I bowed my head as a silent assent, for I wished not for any longer discourse; but ignorant people love to mortify those they have once regarded as their superiors. You are mighty disdainful, methinks Miss, with your nods

and your winks, what ails you that you cannot speak as well as another body—Lord bless us! this pride must come down a peg lower, and very soon too, for my lady says, as you be to dine in the stewards room along with us, as soon as ever my old lady is buried, for she will not allow of no such bugger mugger ways as any body's dining up in their own room, and she does not choose to keep such company for her part; if Mrs. Lenox was so foolish, that is no rule for other folk to be foolish too. Mrs. Elliott, said I, and I rose from my seat with an indignation I could not suppress, if your lady sent you here to insult the unfortunate, let me tell her, it is unbecoming her character as a christian, or her education as a gentlewoman. I am in her power, she can do as she likes with me at present, but I will never sit tamely to hear the

the name of my honoured benefactress treated with contempt; and I warn you for the future, to beware of any reflections on Mrs. Lenox's conduct. Why now, how would you help yourself, Miss, replied the cruel creature, you would not box my ears, would you? and when you are so full of your airs about Mrs. Lenox, you had better be careful what you say of Mrs. Dudly, who is a better christian than you, I dare say, for all your flirts and flings; I warrant she would not go racketting about, when her best friend was a dying, as you did; and then snivel and cry, as if nobody was sorry but yourself, though I will be bound for it, it is nothing but sheer deceit from the bottom. There is no remedy, said I, for such insults as I receive, but in flight, and so saying, I withdrew into my bed-room, and locked the door, for I was sitting in my

dressing-room when Mrs. Elliot came to me. I heard nothing more of the woman, or her mistress, till this morning, for the undertaker, who has known me long, very politely ordered the procession so, that only Mrs. Parker and I went in the first coach, and the presence of that good woman was necessary, to enable me to support myself with becoming decency, and I had not the pain of conversing with any other person as I went from my chamber to the coach, and from the coach to my chamber. After my return from the solemn scene, I devoted the remainder of the evening to prayer and meditation. The temporary calm, which followed the slumber that my fatigue sunk me into, recruited my shattered spirits, and strengthened me for the trial I was this day to undergo. Soon after I had breakfasted, I was summoned into Mrs. Dudly's

Dudly's dressing-room, for she had taken possession of the house, as if it had always been her own; she was sitting on a sofa in great state, and when I came in, without rising, she pointed to a chair near the door, and said, sit down Louisa, for I have a great deal to say to you. I obeyed her command, without speaking, for my heart was too full for utterance. My sister Lenox has died intestate, as I suppose you have been informed—I bowed, you are therefore left entirely dependent upon my son's generosity, and I dare say, if you conduct yourself properly, he will be a good friend to you. Oh! how my proud heart throbbed. Indeed he was so partial to you, that had it not been for your own improper behaviour, of which he is well informed, I know not what imprudent length he might have gone. But thank heaven, you were seen in your

proper colours, before it was too late. Here I could not help interrupting Mrs. Dudly; pray Madam, said I, to what impropriety of conduct do you allude? I am at a loss to account for the resentment you express, or the misconduct you insinuate. We are not going to discuss that point now, Louisa, said Mrs. Dudly, haughtily—I leave that to your own conscience to determine; but the regard my sister once had for you has induced me to interest myself in your welfare, I have therefore sent for you to consult with you upon what plan would be best for your future subsistence; the fifty pounds a year, my brother settled upon you, will not be sufficient to keep you, without some addition. As to your remaining here, it is impossible, for Elliot tells me you gave yourself great airs yesterday, on her telling you that you must dine in the steward's-

room,

room, and took very unbecoming liberties with my name, but that is beneath my notice. You must know, that originally you had no right to aspire so high as my second table, and whatever favours my sister might heap upon you, let me tell you, they ought never to have made you forget the meanness of your extraction. If you suppose that I shall do as my infatuated brother and sister did, you are mistaken. I desire to decline the honour of your society for the future, and must insist on your discontinuing the farce of calling yourself Lenox, instead of taking your own name of Weltzden. If you mean to make use of your talents, either as a music or drawing mistress, I will give you my patronage; or if you rather choose to set up as a milliner, or mantua maker, I will do all in my power to recommend you, and have no objection to

advance a hundred or two pounds to put you into business; but indeed, added she with a sneer, I think you would be fitter for the stage than any thing else. You have a fine tragedy air child, and you know you could there continue to play the part of a fine lady, and that seems what you like best. Tears choaked my utterance, and I was unable to answer this torrent of ill-nature for some minutes; as soon as I could collect myself sufficiently, I arose from my seat, and making a courtesy, told Mrs. Dudly, I must beg leave to decline any of her offers of service, as I had determined never to accept of favours from those who despised me. As to my employment, I had not yet given it a thought, but that in fixing upon it I would take the advice of a friend, not so strongly prejudiced against me, as the lady I had now

the

the honour of speaking to. Very well Miss, replied Mrs. Dudly, in a rage, it is vastly well. I can see which way you are going—but let me tell you, it ill becomes you to treat your benefactress's sister in this manner; nor does it suit me to put up with it, therefore, the sooner you remove from this house the more agreeable; your partial friend will no doubt be ready to receive you; and while you do stay here, I desire I may hear no more of the airs of a dressing-room for such a girl as you. Your cloaths you may take away with you, but the jewels and trinkets with which my sister so improperly adorned her idol, I desire you will leave behind, under pain of being accused of robbery. Your commands, however haughty, Madam, shall be strictly obeyed in every respect, and I now take my final leave of you. So saying, I withdrew

withdrew, and I leave you to judge of my feelings, my tender, sympathising friend. In two days I will pour my sorrows into your maternal bosom, and receive the consolation you promise me; but ah! my dear Madam, I fear it is not in my power to give any, for my poor heart is nearly broken. Tell me, dearest Madam, do you think I behaved with unbecoming pride in the hard trial I have just related? I hope I did not, but mine is a difficult task; to steer between the two rocks of meanness and pride, without splitting on either, requires a skilful pilot. I know I have no noble birth to boast of—my origin is mean—but must my soul be mean also—surely not—there is a dignity in human nature, when untainted by guilt, that ought not to be meanly sacrificed on the altar of abject fear. Cruelly as I was spurned, my heart beat

beat proudly, and scorned the meanness of my oppressor, and could we have changed places, I would have made her feel the superiority of my mind, by shewing her that kindness she so unjustly withheld from me. Farewell, my best and only friend on earth; in heaven I have one who will never forsake me, while I trust in him as faithfully as I now do. This letter I am sure needs no comments from,

Your afflicted,

But affectionate,

LOUISA.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

Augustus Dudly to Mrs. Dudly.

YOUR letter, my dear mother, has planted daggers in my heart! The amiable the benevolent Mrs. Lenox dead—Louisa Lenox disgraced, and no longer worthy of the regard of her surviving friends; but do you think, Madam, that the acquisition of a paltry three thousand a year, can compensate for such irreparable losses? would to heaven I had never seen the bare assertion, written in characters so highly respected. No, Madam, if indeed Louisa is unworthy your esteem—if I must no longer regard her as my future bride—if, faithless to the

vows she made me, she has transferred her wavering affections to another object—think not that the heart of your Augustus can be infected by such a volatile example. My predeliction for Louisa was not the fruits of a heated imagination; it was not her beauty, lovely as she is, on which I doated; the perfection, I thought I saw in her mind; the goodness of her heart; the purity, and unaffected sweetness of her manners, won my affections; mine was love founded on the truest friendship, the highest esteem; and yet you treat my passion, as if it had been a slight impression received at the eyes, which never reaching farther than the fancy, was liable to be effaced by the first pretty face, whose novelty might attract my attention. You are mistaken, Madam, grossly mistaken, if you imagine that either of my cousins can detain me a moment longer in Ireland,

Ireland, than is necesssry to conclude the business I came upon. I do justice to the charms of the ladies; but it is impossible I can ever regard them in any other light than as friends—would to heaven I had never seen them; this fatal journey has cost me all I held dear upon earth; and for the future, all places will be alike indifferent to me. The most polished circle near St. James's, or the wilds of America. I think, if any preference can be given, the latter will be more congenial to my feelings than the former. My eye filled with distrust, my heart with disappointment; in every lovely face my imagination will behold a canker. Oh, Louisa! Louisa! thou bright chimera so long worshiped by my idolizing soul! how shall I ever be able to strip thee of those perfections, with which my partial fancy had adorned thy lovely

image?

image? still, still, the bright illusion will follow me; still, still, shall I dream of mutual affection, mutual bliss, but wake to agony and disappointment! If the wind serves, I shall be in England in a few days. I shall stay there but a few days, just long enough to settle my affairs in such a manner as may spare you, Madam, a weight of trouble, unfit for a lady to encounter; that done, I shall join the expedition now fitting out under the command of a royal personage, and hope to find that peace abroad, which my friends have deprived me of at home. In the mean time, I entreat you, Madam, for my sake, to treat Miss Lenox with the greatest tenderness; remember what she was, what she must ever be, to this tortured heart—remember also, that both Mr. and Mrs. Lenox promised to provide for her nobly—that she has been educated to ex-

pect

pect it—that she is delicacy itself—unfit to contend with the rude storms of fortune—that if seduced by the vanity too natural to her sex, she has forsaken the first object of her love, perhaps the imperfections of that object may be more to blame than herself; was I not always put in her way, by her friends, Mr. and Mrs. Lenox, and pointed out to her as her future husband; and might not an anxiousness to oblige her benefactors, by striving to love me, lead her into the error of supposing she did so. Ah! Madam, she has a powerful advocate in my heart, and I am sure there is nothing can ever reconcile me to the bitterness of my lot, but the knowledge of her happiness; if I can be certain of that, existence may not appear so heavy a burthen as it now does to the distracted,

AUGUSTUS DUDLY.

LETTER XVI.

Louisa to Mrs. Mordant.

ONCE more, and only this once, I shall address you, my dear friend, from Lenox Abbey; from the seat of my former bliss—of my present wretchedness; sweet scenes of my infant joys, my youthful love, farewell! beneath your lovely shades will never wander a happier being than the once idolized Louisa; nor will a more wretched heart, unless transfixed by guilt, ever bid these beauteous scenes adieu. I have been walking round the pleasure grounds—visiting the garden—the grotto—the waterfall—all, all, endeared to this sad throbbing

throbbing breast, by the fond recollection of halcyon days, now gone for ever; such as will never again cheer my desponding soul. I need not say I have watered every beloved spot with my tears; the falling leaves, and the hollow blast of autumn, tinged all around with melancholy congenial to my own. The alcove where last I sat with Augustus, the false Augustus, the day before his departure to Ireland; ah! what did I not feel at entering it, at seeing our cyphers carved by his beloved hand! I threw myself on the seat in an agony of grief; thou senseless wood, I cried, canst retain the impression of his shortlived passion, when every vestige of it has been long effaced from his faithless heart; yes, my dear Mrs. Mordant, the torture of doubt is exchanged for dreadful certainty. Augustus has forgotten me—has left the poor,

the

the mean dependent of his family, for the rich, the noble, the beautiful Miss Dudly. Mrs. Dudly has received a letter from him to-day, in which this news is announced; he is coming to England in a few days, and will stay no longer than is necessary to settle his affairs, and then return to fetch his lovely bride. This information Mrs. Dudly gave Mrs. Parker just now; and told her, at the same time, that as it was her son's desire, that whatever Mrs. Lenox had given me should be mine, she desired I would keep all my trinkets, books, &c. &c. The jewels, as belonging to the family, I must leave behind. So I suppose Mr. Dudly thinks himself vastly generous in leaving me so rich. Good heavens! have I lived to see this day? surely it would not have been such a vast condescension to have written me a farewell letter—not a line,

not

not a softening line to reconcile me to my fate. Oh! I am hurled at one blow, from the pinnacle of bliss, into the abyss of misery, without a single pause to break the fall. I can write no more, my tears blot the paper, and blind my weeping eyes. The day after to-morrow, my dear friend, I shall set out for your hospitable mansion, scarcely less forlorn than when the faithful Atkinson first introduced me to his benevolent master. Mrs. Parker will accompany me, she thanks you for your kind offer, and gladly accepts it.

Your's

L. WELTZDEN.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

Lady Caroline Egerton to Louisa Lenox.

ACCEPT my sincere condolence, my dear Louisa, on your recent loss. I have felt most deeply for you, ever since I heard of Mrs. Lenox's illness, but when I was informed of her death, and with the sad aggravation of her having left you unprovided for, I cannot express how shocked and surprised I was. I take the earliest opportunity of assuring you of my unalterable affection, and I entreat you to command any service in my power, with the same freedom you would a sister's. The

intimate footing we have always lived upon authorises me to make the offer to you, and the professions of regard you have so often flattered me with, leave no room for your refusal. If indeed you love me as I do you, you will not scruple to accept it, as I am sure I should not hesitate an instant becoming the obliged, if you were to be the obliger. So cruel and unexpected a disappointment may have sadly deranged your finances; without any imputation of extravagance. I have therefore taken the liberty of enclosing a draft upon Drummonds, for one hundred pounds, to answer any present immergency, and which can be returned at your convenience; but I know Mrs. Dudly would be an unpleasant person to apply to for any thing of that kind, so I hope you will not be so unkind as to refuse it, but convince me of your

esteem,

esteem, by drawing upon me for more, whenever you find it necessary. My fortune is large enough to supply all my wants, and allow me to assist my friends; make it still more valuable then, my dear Louisa, by sharing it with me, and here let me close that subject without further animadversion.

Do not imagine, my dear Louisa, that you alone are wandering in the gloomy vale of sorrow. Affliction is our birthright, and it is the only inheritance whose certainty is never questioned. My heart is sorely oppressed at this moment, and I have the painful addition to my own distress, of seeing my dear father and mother as unhappy as myself. You may recollect the gipsy's telling me at the masquerade, that I should be rivalled by my sister.

You observed, that she must be a stranger to me by her saying that, as I had no sister. You may remember also my telling you, that you were mistaken, that I had a sister, though her melancholy situation made it impossible she should be my rival. I promised too, to inform you of the particulars of this strange mystery another opportunity. The bustle of company, and the consequent dissipation of mind that prevailed at Northington Castle during your stay there, occasioned my promise to slip my memory, and your delicacy prevailed over your curiosity, too strongly to suffer you to remind me of it. I will now satisfy you by relating the melancholy tale, and leave you to judge how happy I must feel myself, in my near relation to so much distress. You have heard, I am sure, that my father was a widower when my mother married him, but

I suppose

I suppose you thought, as most people do think, that the Marquis of Hartly was the only child by his first marriage; alas! the Marquis is a twin, and his unfortunate sister has been in a melancholy deranged state of mind, ever since her infancy. So much so, as to preclude the possibility of introducing her into company, or even enjoying her society in a family circle. The malady is hereditary, her unhappy mother died of it soon after the birth of her children; and as if she had forseen the misfortune that awaited her daughter, she entreated Mr. Orme, that worthy man you so justly admire, to take the sole care of her education. This injunction has been most piously complied with, and my father has paid the most religious respect to the dying wish of his lady, which carries, however, a strong tincture of insanity with it—as it would have appeared

more proper to recommend a daughter to the care of a female, than to a male ; but if it must be the latter, it was strange the good lady should overlook her husband. Lady Emily, that is my unhappy sister's name, has been brought up so privately at Northington Castle, that scarcely any body knows there is such a person. A secrecy that my father and mother encourage as much as possible, as the knowledge of Lady Emily's sad state of mind, might injure Lord Hartly in the eyes of the world; and it is very fortunate his Lordship has never shewn the least symptom of derangement, but is a most accomplished promising young man, and universally esteemed and admired. Poor Emily has always shewn the most settled antipathy to my mother, who has vainly endeavoured to remove this ill-founded aversion, by a series of indulgences,

gences, and kind behaviour; finding these means fail, she has lately been, though reluctantly, obliged to confine Lady Emily more strictly, since it is impossible to tell what these unhappy people may do, when they fancy themselves ill-treated by any particular person. My mother's great tenderness for me, has made her always strictly forbid any meeting between my unhappy sister and me, so that I had never seen her till an accident which happened three days ago, introduced us to each other. My father and I had been out on horseback a few miles, and as we returned home, after we had entered the park, and were descending that little hill where the chinese temple stands, my father's horse suddenly stumbled, and threw him with great force over his head. I was not an instant dismounting, and lent my assistance to the two grooms, who pre-

sently raised him from the ground. He had received a severe blow on the head, and was so much stunned with its violence, as to be wholly insensible to the agony of his distressed daughter. Finding all our efforts to restore him of no effect, I dispatched one of the grooms to the castle for assistance, he presently returned with a number of domestics, and a kind of litter, on which they bore their seemingly lifeless master to the saloon that opens to the park. Medical assistance was sent for, and an express dispatched after my mother, who was gone airing in her sociable, with Miss Egerton, and Emma Evelyn. The alarm spread all over the castle, and by some chance reached poor Emily's ears, who, escaping unobserved from her chamber, entered the saloon just as Mr. Orme, by chafing my father's temples with hartshorn,

had

had succeeded in bringing him to himself; I was bathing his hand with tears of joy, when the door opened, and turning my head, in expectation of seeing Dr. Richards, who had been sent for, I was struck with the sight of the most celestial form my eyes ever beheld—it was the unhappy Emily! she darted forward, and throwing herself on her knees beside me; suffer me too, she cried, to claim a share in my father's love, if yet he lives to bless me; oh! turn me not from him—I was told he was dead—that heaven had deprived me of my only hope on earth—for limited as your power has been, you have never quite forgotten I was your child—bless me, my father! bless me, I implore you, before that cruel woman comes who tears me from your sight. My poor father, but just recovering from so violent a shock, was quite overcome by

this plaintive address, and shed tears over his unfortunate child; he raised her from the ground, and clasped her to his bosom, calling her his dear Emily. Mr. Orme said, my dear Lady Emily, I entreat you to retire; you see that the Duke is safe; but after so severe a fall, this interview may affect him too much; and I know what pain that would give your good heart. And must I obey that cruel command—painful as the task is, must I tear myself away from my father, just as his tenderness dawns upon me. Oh! my happy, thrice happy sister, said the sweet syren, turning to me with exquisite sensibility, feel for the wretched Emily, denied the blessings you so largely enjoy—torn from the bosom of her only parent—cut off from society—an alien in her father's house—a slave in the land of freedom. Ah! if you do not

partake

partake of the rock's flinty nature from whence you sprung—if tender sympathy e'er touched your soul, plead for a wretched outcast; nor let the spark expire which nature's torch has kindled in my father's breast. I held out my hand to the sweet pleader, and she pressed it to her lips, then turning to my father, her lovely eyes swimming in tears, one more embrace my father, call me once more your dear Emily! My poor father could not speak, but he opened his arms to receive her, and kissed her cheek with tenderness, as her head reclined on his shoulder; at that instant my mother, Miss Egerton, and Emma entered; poor Emily started from her father's arms, and casting a look of wild affright at my mother, darted out of the room. You know my mother's haughty manner when she is offended. Good heaven, how angry she

looked. What tragedy has been acting here? said she; they told me your grace was hurt by a fall from your horse; I little expected to find you engaged in conversation with a maniac; this I suppose is your doings Mr. Orme; girls, said she, turning to us, you may leave the room. We all obeyed instantly, and I heard very high words as soon as we quitted the saloon, between Mr. Orme and my mother. We all went into my dressing-room, and Miss Egerton said, do you know who that lovely girl is, cousin Cary, that was hugging my uncle when we came in. Yes, said I, but what then? Why then, I can tell you it is the same that engaged Lord Ormond's attention so, at the masquerade; the pretty nun I mean; I suppose you remember her, do not you? Oh yes, very well, said I, but I am sure this is not her; and I am sure it is, said

Miss

Miss Egerton, there are not two such faces in the world. Emma Evelyn was the white nun said I, you have forgot that. No, I have not, replied Miss Egerton, there was some juggle about that affair, and Emma knows what it is, if she chose to tell. Emma stood colouring all the while, and looked as guilty as possible, but denied knowing any thing of the matter. You had better, Miss Egerton, said she, persuade the Duchess to be of your opinion, and then I shall have another series of lectures about that abominable masquerade. No, do not be afraid of me, said the lively girl, my aunt's looks have frightened me too much just now, for me to tell her any of my conjectures for this fortnight to come, and by that time I shall forget you, and the pretty nun, and half a hundred more things. Oh! added she, by the bye, I had nearly forgotten

gotten that I have a letter to write to Lady Emily Pemberton, and I will tell her my aunt caught my uncle kissing a pretty girl, and that there will be work for the learned doctors near St. Paul's, in consequence of her furious jealousy. Oh! it will be in the newspapers in less than eight and forty hours, and out of the room she skipped humming a French air, as lively as herself. As soon as she was gone, Emma, said I, what am I to think of this mystery? can you be so unkind as to withhold a secret from your friend Caroline, that so nearly concerns her? Was the secret my own, I would not hesitate an instant, said the dear girl, confiding it to your ladyship's honour, but the secret of another I have no right to reveal; and I am persuaded the excuse of my not being at liberty to reveal it, will prevent your making any farther enquires

quires on the subject. Enough, my dear Emma, replied I, if you never renew this topic again, depend upon it I never shall. She thanked me for what she termed my generosity, and so we parted.

When the physician came, he ordered my father to be kept very quiet, and said that he was more flurried than hurt. The Duchess then declared to me, that she dreaded the consequences of the unfortunate interview between the Duke and Lady Emily. I must positively have her removed from the castle. The Duke will not allow of her being quite shut up, and when there is company here, what disagreeable exposures are we not subject to, from her eluding the vigilance of her attendance. She then spoke with a degree of severity of the dear unfortunate, that I must own hurt me extremely,

tremely, for her lovely form will never be effaced from my remembrance, and her pathetic address to me, has awakened in my bosom the tenderest sympathy for her misfortunes. My dear mother, I am sure, was led into a warmth she was not aware of, by her fears for my father's health. I entreated her to have Dr. W's. opinion of my sister's case, and hinted, that perhaps, the malady was not without remedy; but my mother reproved me for harbouring such romantic ideas, and forbid me to speak again on that subject. You are bewitched by the girl's beauty, added she, and forget that a lovely form may enshrine a crazy mind. No wonder I was struck with Lady Emily, for I must own I think her a perfect model of beauty. Ah! Louisa, was her figure exhibited at the drawing-room, who would then bestow a look upon the now too

highly

highly praised Caroline. Emily would soon verify the gipsy's prediction, and become the rival of her sister. To give you some idea of this beautiful girl, I will attempt to describe her, though I am conscious my very best endeavours cannot do her common justice. Her form is elegantly slender, without appearing thin—her height just what it ought to be—the form of her neck and shoulders is inimitably graceful, and her fine auburn hair, part of which, in defiance to fashion hung in luxuriant ringlets down her back, while part partially shaded her fair forehead and blushing cheeks, gave something of celestial to her whole figure. She was dressed in a loose robe of white muslin, carefully fastened round her slender waist, by a purple zone, and a ribbon of the same colour was as carelessly

carelessly interwoven within her beautiful hair; her hand and arm are delicate to a degree, and she has an impressive manner of waving it as she speaks, affecting beyond measure, to those who know her unhappy situation. You and I, in our dissertations on beauty, have generally preferred blue eyes to black; but Emily's, which are of the latter colour, excel any I ever saw, both for brilliancy and softness; the latter is a perfection seldom seen in black eyes, but in Emily's, which are large and full, and shaded with long silken eyelashes, there is a beautiful languor, quite consonant with my ideas of feminine delicacy and softness; her eyebrows are finely arched, her nose grecian, and her mouth can only be described by the hacknied epithet of carnation and pearl, for I am sure her lips and teeth can lose nothing by the comparison;

parison; her complexion is delicate, rather inclined to pale, except when she blushes, which is whenever she speaks, and then the roses on her cheeks are fresh as the dawn of Aurora. I declare, I have hardly been able to think of any thing else but this unfortunate sister of mine, since I saw her, and Selina Egerton's assertion, that Emily was the white nun she saw with Lord Ormond, puzzles me more than I can express. She says justly, that there are not two such faces as Emily's; but I must own I cannot think how it could be contrived, or why it should be wished, that she should attend the masquerade; nor by what means she could be introduced to Lord Ormond. There is undoubtedly a mystery about that affair, which Emma Evelyn alone can unravel, but she has made it dishonourable in me to enquire into it. I cannot, however,

help

help my curiosity; that is a failing natural to my sex, and I own I have enough to do to suppress mine just now. As to Lord Ormond, I am persuaded his affections are engaged somewhere. My mother was greatly piqued at his Lordship's leaving Northington Castle, without making the proposals she had depended upon; for my own part, I am very angry too, not with Lord Ormond however, but with my own rebellious heart, that disposed of itself before it had insured a suitable return. His Lordship possesses a sufficient degree of perfection, both of mind and person, to excuse my weakness in the eyes of the world; but the tribunal of my own judgment is severer in its decrees than any other could be; and by that I am sentenced to perpetual regret for my folly. I have just had the satisfaction of hearing that my

dear

dear father is better, and that he thinks himself sufficiently strong to bear my company for half an hour, and has accordingly sent for me. I attend him with joy and alacrity; and shall not forget my sister's injunction, to plead her cause with him, if an opportunity offers. Adieu, my dear Louisa, let me hear from you soon; and when you are sufficiently recovered, I shall hope you will pass a few months with me.

Your's most affectionately,

C. EGERTON.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

The same to the same.

I WRITE again, my dear Louisa, though I addressed you too lately to expect an answer for some days; but my heart is full, and I must give it vent, or it will burst. When I had dispatched my last letter to you, I attended my dear father in his dressing-room, and found him sitting in a great chair, seemingly quite recovered from the accident that had alarmed us all so justly. He held out his hand to me, and I congratulated him on the narrow escape he had had. He thanked me with a smile, and added, this accident, my dear Caroline, has wrought a wonderful

wonderful revolution in my heart. I am not the same man I was; I have had time for some serious reflections, and I hope the mercy of heaven is not thrown away upon me. I listened with silent surprise, and could not imagine to what change my father alluded. He continued, is not your sister Emily a lovely girl, Caroline? She is indeed Sir, replied I, and would to heaven her intellects were as perfect as her beauty! she would then be the brightest star in the hemisphere of fashion. And can it be, that my dear girl is sincere in this wish; can it be that you really would rejoice in seeing your sister restored to her rights, and at once your rival in fortune and beauty? I am sure Sir, replied I, that no rivalship whatever could obliterate the warm impression her interesting appearance has made upon my heart; but pray Sir,

explain

explain yourself, is there any hopes of my sister's recovery? It is time to withdraw the veil from your eyes my child, said he; alas! it is long since it was withdrawn from mine, though I have not had courage to act as I ought to have done, nor to assert the rights of my injured child, the only relic of my amiable and injured wife, whose days were shortened by my cruelty—do not start, my dear Caroline, nor look upon your father with horror—his days have been imbittered by remorse, and many a sleepless night has witnessed the agony of his repentance; but I will now make what reparation is in my power, the only method of appeasing the stings of a guilty conscience. A too violent attachment for your mother, Caroline, and an habitual weakness of my own, which would neither suffer me to avow, nor conquer my passion, were the

the first causes of my subsequent misery; I married Lady Emily at the instigation, and to oblige my father and mother, though I doated upon Miss Levison; nor could all the amiable qualities of the lovely Emily estrange my heart from its first attachment; but alas! as I looked upon her as the cause of my disappointment, although innocent and unconscious of the wrong she did me, my heart unjustly held her in abhorrence; and I treated her with a degree of cruelty which astonishes me in the retrospect. She fell a victim to my unfeeling behaviour, and died in child bed, of a brain fever, brought on by agitation and distress. She was never subject to any derangement of intellects, nor do I any longer believe the cruel fabrication of Emily's insanity. I started as if a serpent had stung me, and exclaimed involuntarily, can it be

possible? My Caroline, I entreat you to hear me with calmness, it is absolutely necessary you should. There is a very large fortune, entailed by my grandfather on the eldest daughter of the Northington family. My father had a large one too, it has therefore been accumulating, and to that fortune my poor Emily is entitled by birth; but the avarice and ambition of your mother—I am sorry, Caroline, to be obliged to speak disrespectfully of one you are bound to revere, but truth commands, and indispensible duty compels me; led her to wish her child should possess this brilliant fortune, and blinded by her fondness for you, she sacrificed her integrity, and has kept this unfortunate child in such close captivity, that if her intellects are impaired, it is the cruel consequence of her barbarous treatment. I sunk back instantly, neither

in

in a fit, nor out of one; my heart was too full for utterance, and I could not get the relief of one tear. I know your generous heart, continued he, taking my hand, I know your generous heart, my Caroline, and therefore have not feared to confide this important secret, for such it must still be for sometime, to your keeping. I am persuaded you will find more real satisfaction in relinquishing the fortune you have no title to, than you could have done in the most ample enjoyment of the luxuries and consequence it would have purchased for you. But before any public steps are taken in this nice affair, I must closely investigate the real situation of my injured child; for should the Duchess's assertion be true, any attempt to restore her to society will only serve to expose her; but I have every reason to believe it to be a mere fabrication,

and shall have Dr. W's. opinion of Emily, as soon as I am well enough to go to London; in the mean time I shall insist upon her being admitted to our table, whenever there is none but our own family present, and I think I may rely on your prudence, Caroline, not to divulge what I have imparted to you to your mother, as you know the violence of her temper too well, though you were till now unacquainted with her unjust treatment of your unfortunate sister. I assured him that I felt myself too highly honoured by his confidence, to be tempted to betray it, and that I thought I was bound by the most sacred duty, to lend every assistance in my power to the restoration of my sister's rights, as I had unhappily been the innocent cause of her suffering, and that though I must ever lament that the mistaken fondness of my

mother for me, had induced her to act so unworthily, yet I felt myself too strongly bound by gratitude, to dare to arraign her conduct, as an indifferent person might do. I feel the delicacy of your situation, my child, replied my father, and pity the sufferings which so undeservedly fall upon you, but I think it necessary to acquaint you with these particulars, lest death should unexpectedly deprive me of the power of executing the tardy justice I meditate; in case of such an event, I know my Caroline would become the advocate for her oppressed sister, the generous defender of her rights! I am in daily expectation of your brother's return from Vienna, and shall then disclose the dark mystery to him, and act in concert with him, to re-instate your sister in her lawful possessions. I hardly know how it can be done, without exposing

your mother; but be assured I love her too well, to endanger her reputation, if there is a possibility of avoiding it. I have been talking with Mr. Orme this morning on this interesting subject, and he assures me that Emily is not, nor ever was, in the least deranged in mind, except in a fever brought on by the Duchess's threatening to send her to France, and which nearly cost her her life; a threat which was afterwards put in execution, and it is most likely she would never have returned, but for the terrors spread by the French revolution, which obliged me to send for her.

This journey from France was productive of an event that has led to her final delivery. Some difficulties that occurred in her journey, were relieved by the friendly interposition of Lord Ormond, (you will

will think, Louisa, what I felt at this part of my father's narrative) then travelling for his improvement; his Lordship did not know who Emily was, as Mr. Orme had been enjoined secrecy; but so generous was his care of her, that he risked his own life to preserve her's. The consequence was, a most violent attachment on his side, which though undeclared till after his arrival in England, when he met Mr. Orme unexpectedly here, yet was well known to that penetrating man from its beginning when Lord Ormond fully avowed his unaltered affection for Emily, and entreated to know who she was, Orme thought it but common justice to both, to reveal the secret; and Lord Ormond acquainted his father with it, who has written to me to entreat me to allow of his son's addresses to Lady Emily Egerton, my eldest daughter.

It seems, by some artifice of Orme's or Miss Evelyn's, Emily was at the masquerade given on your birth day, and was the occasion of Lord Ormond's neglect to you, Caroline, which highly offended your mother; but my dear Caroline, you look pale, said my father with some emotion; I forgot how greatly I must affect you by this recital; I will not say any more on the subject at present, only entreat you to be prudent. I repeated my promise of secrecy, and begged leave to retire, as I was unable to speak on any other subject now, and unequal to that any longer; my father kissed me tenderly, and I went into my dressing room, where giving full scope to my stifled emotions, I burst into a flood of tears, and happily they relieved me, for the wonderful tale my father had been telling me, was almost too much for me. While I was endeavouring

ing to rally my sinking spirits, and summoning resolution to appear at dinner with becoming composure, I could not help exclaiming, good heavens! to what an excess of misery has the ambitious avarice of my mistaken mother reduced me—my fondest hopes are blighted—my brightest days clouded with disappointment! exposed to the detestation of my sister, perhaps I shall never be so happy as to obtain her regard, for I am the immediate, though innocent cause of her sufferings; nor can I quite divest myself of remorse, at the recollection of what she has endured for my sake, though I would sooner have forfeited my life, than have occasioned her an hour's unhappiness, to gratify any selfish or ambitious wish of mine. Oh! that I could convince the sweet sufferer of my abhorrence of the whole transaction, without re-

flecting disgrace upon my mother, who I still flatter myself has been deceived herself, respecting the real state of Lady Emily's intellects. I saw my father for a few minutes this morning, he told me he should dine below, and intended to insist on Lady Emily's doing so too; he is gone out airing with my mother, and what will be the result of their conference, I know not; but I dread the thoughts of her anger, more than I can express; and I have a great mind to plead the head-ach as an excuse for not going down; but perhaps my father will be displeased—I do not know what is best.

EIGHT O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING.

I mustered resolution enough to attend the summons to dinner, and went with a palpitating

palpitating heart into the dining-parlour, but found only my father and mother there. Selina Egerton, and Emma Evelyn were gone to stay a week at Lady G's. I saw the latter looked highly displeased. I seated myself without speaking, and not a word was uttered for sometime. When I thought I could trust my voice, I asked my father whether he found himself better for his ride? he replied, with a laconic yes, and silence again prevailed. I was so agitated I could scarcely swallow, and was happy when the removal of the cloth forced me from the observation of the servants. As soon as we were alone, my mother turned to me, and with stifled rage said, Caroline, I do not know whether you are a confident of your father's, nor whether you approve of his romantic schemes, but I think it necessary to inform you, that it was his inten-

tion to make me the companion of insanity; an insult I am determined never to bear, and hope you have a spirit equally tenacious of propriety. I am at a loss, Madam, said I, to know what you allude to. If indeed you are ignorant, Caroline, said she, at the same time throwing one of her terrible glances at me; but I suspect otherwise, it is right you should be told that your father has conceived a scheme, as mad as the person in whose favour it is formed, of adding to the sweets of our domestic bliss, by the introduction of his crazy daughter, Emily's society; thank heaven I had provided for her, before I learnt this wonderful resolution; she is in a place of safety; the secret too rests in my bosom, and nothing but legal force shall wrest it from me. Believe me, Madam, said my father starting up in anger, that shall not be wanting

wanting to free the dear sufferer, unless a timely resolution to discover her abode saves you from the disgrace of public proceedings. At this speech my mother's fury knew no bounds, and she loaded my father with the bitterest reproaches. I did not dare to utter a syllable, but stood trembling, and weeping by my mother's side, wishing, but fearing to leave them; at length my father quitted the room; my mother then went into strong hystericks; and I was forced to ring for her maid to assist me in recovering her; as soon as her fits left her, she retired to bed, and I came up to my room, and scribbled thus far. Pity me, my dear Louisa! I am sure you will, when you reflect on the variety of painful circumstances in which I am involved.

THURSDAY.

THURSDAY.

I met good Mr. Orme in the park this morning, where I had strolled to take an early ramble. He saluted me with his usual good humour and politeness, and we presently entered into conversation: to my infinite surprise he introduced the subject of my sister's disappearance from the castle. The Duke has informed me, said the good man, that he has entrusted the secret of poor Lady Emily's injuries to your ladyship; I am therefore extremely happy in this opportunity of conversing with you on that mournful subject. He then expatiated on the sufferings she had endured in a variety of situations, from my mother's unrelenting persecution; and affirmed in the most solemn manner, that her intellects

are

are as perfect as mine, concluding with a forcible appeal to my compassion, and an earnest entreaty that I would use my influence with the Duke, and not suffer his newly awakened tenderness for my unfortunate sister to expire. I cannot surely, said he, pay a higher compliment to your ladyship's benevolent heart, nor give a stronger proof of the exalted opinion I entertain of your justice and generosity, than by soliciting your assistance towards restoring to Lady Emily her birthright; an envious disposition would regard her as a formidable rival. Your fortune must be lessened by the restoring of her's; and the beauty of your sister may, by some, all lovely as you are, be thought superior to your ladyship's; but who shall dare to claim a superiority of soul over the noble, the disinterested Lady Caroline, when rising above

above the weak vanity of her sex, she becomes the kind advocate of an oppressed sister—the disinterested supporter of her rights—the unenvying admirer of her beauty. You rate too highly the simple performance of an indispensible duty, my good Sir; but little merit can be claimed by me, for renouncing a fortune which does not belong to me—and to love my sister requires no effort—the impulse is irresistible. I then enquired of Mr. Orme, if he had any idea where Lady Emily was gone. He said he could form no conception—so sudden, so secret has been the Duchess's manœuvres, added he, that I had not the least suspicion of her design. I feared, indeed, the consequence of her grace's finding the sweet girl pleading the cause of nature to her half relenting father. But when the Duke informed me of the happy re-

solution

solution he had formed of restoring Lady Emily to society; and expressed this determination not to be influenced by the Duchess's displeasure, I flattered myself that no daring attempt would have been made upon the liberty of my dear child; particularly as the Duke told me he had received proposals from the Duke of Beaumont, for an alliance between Lady Emily and Lord Ormond, and that his grace meant to accept them. Lord Ormond met my sister abroad, said I, faintly. Yes Madam, replied Mr. Orme, and with unequaled generosity risked his own life to save Lady Emily's. Your ladyship will not wonder that gratitude kindled the flame of a tender passion in your sister's artless bosom; when you reflect too, upon the shining excellence of that amiable young nobleman, not to speak of his pre-

tensions,

tensions, whose most winning excellence is that benevolence that flows from the dictates of his heart. His Lordship was equally struck with Lady Emily, though unconscious of her rank, and ignorant even of her name, till after his arrival in England. His Lordship's affection has stood the test of time, and remains unchanged, after an absence of four years. Your ladyship will easily guess the joy I felt in the anticipation of this desirable union. You will as easily imagine my distress at this last stroke of policy to injure my darling. I know the instability of the Duke's disposition, and how easily he may sink into a state of apathy from which he has so lately immerged, and suffer the Duchess to regain her usual ascendancy over him; what then may be the fate of the unfortunate Emily? I tremble to think upon it! perhaps the very malady

which

which has been so falsely attributed to her may be brought on by the cruelty of her treatment, and she may indeed become a miserable maniac—perhaps, at this instant the lovely victim languishes in that shocking receptacle of human misery, a private mad-house! Oh! Mr. Orme, do not, I beseech you, imagine my mother capable of such cruelty, said I, the poor man shook his head; besides, added I, if indeed my sister has the perfect use of her reason, they would not receive her into a place meant only for the confinement, or recovery, of those who have lost that blessing. My dear Lady Caroline, your ignorance of the world, and the goodness of your own heart, make it impossible you should know what wicked things are done every day for money. I am sorry to say, Lady Emily's sanity would be no bar to her being received into

one

one of those houses, if a handsome annuity was paid for her maintenance. I was shocked, greatly shocked, to hear that such oppressive cruelty could be practised with impunity, in a land where freedom is become proverbial; but I cannot help flattering myself, that my mother is incapable of such diabolical proceedings; though I must own, I am startled to see to what a length she has been led by a misplaced ambition. Ah! if she knew how little I value the riches she has so dishonourably procured me, she would no longer disgrace herself and me, by unjustly detaining them from the lawful possessor. How gladly would I yield them all, with every other distinction of birth, and fortune, could I, by the sacrifice, obtain the regard of Lord Ormond; a prize my sister has won without the aid of those factitious advantages.

His

His Lordship's affection for her, is a tribute to her merit alone, unbiassed by any other consideration—but hush! I must avoid, carefully avoid, a subject so dangerous to my peace; from this time my Louisa, I will mention my unhappy partiality no more. I will endeavour to forget the thousand amiable somethings, that gave birth to it—I have already sufficiently injured poor Emily—shall I envy her the possession of a heart of which I never had the smallest share? Heaven forbid! long may she feel the joys of mutual love, and never know a diminution of them, till death closes the happy scene! I assured Mr. Orme, before we parted, that I would do every thing I could in behalf of my sister, consistent with the duty and respect I owe my mother—but that I felt a repugnance to the idea of her being exposed, too strong to allow me

to

to act with all the energy the circumstances required. He appeared satisfied with my promise, and said, it was all he required of me—in short, it was as much as I ought to do. My mother appears quite recovered this morning; I breakfasted with her, but did not dare lead to the subject next my heart, as she carefully avoided it. I shall have a *tête-à-tête* with my father by and by, and then I shall say every thing I can to enforce his good resolutions.

THURSDAY NIGHT.

I thought when I was writing to you this morning, my Louisa, it was hardly possible my situation could be rendered more embarrassing, but the malice of fortune pursues me, and I am really more than ever to

be

be pitied. You shall judge when I relate the conversation I had with my father; but before I get into the strain of egotism that of late has engrossed the whole of my letters, let me acknowledge the receipt of your kind epistle; and thank you for your temporary acceptance of my offer. You are afraid, you say, to use it, lest it should never be in your power to repay it—fye Louisa! would not your entire acceptance of such a trifle be an additional favour conferred on me; and do you think I should be troubled with such silly scruples, if we could change places? but I can forgive you this delicacy, which borders too much upon distrust, when I recollect the cruel usage you have met with from Mrs. Dudly. Who could have imagined her fair face, and soft demeanor, covered such a deceitful heart, such an unfeeling,

feeling, nay furious temper. But be not disheartened, my dear Louisa, if her son inherits any thing of his mother's disposition, you are a gainer by his inconstancy, and you may find many amiable men, who will think themselves honoured by the possession of your hand, without any particle of that fortune the mean creature makes such a fuss about. Poor good Mrs. Lenox! it would have embittered her last moments, if she could have supposed her sister capable of such basenesss. It surprises me, that amiable woman could neglect the necessary duty of making a will, particularly when the dependence of one so dear to her, could alone be insured by the performance of it. But Mrs. Dudly is so wicked—I have strange suspicions—I should not be surprised if the will had been destroyed, to secure the possession of all the estates to that nonpariel

son

son of her's, without the alliance they are none of them worthy of. I read your letter to my mother, and she seemed to feel the same resentment that I do. She exclaimed at the injustice of Mrs. Dudly, and blamed the neglect of Mrs. Lenox; and she desired me to offer you this house as your home, and to assure you, that you shall be treated with the same respect, whenever you favour us with your company, as when the presumptive heiress to a large fortune. She says she shall take a pride in mortifying those who wish to degrade you. My mother applauds your spirit in relinquishing the name of Lenox, your own is far more honourable to you, and by whatever title you are called, you must ever be a most enchanting and amiable girl—these are my mother's own words. Oh! that she was as ready to do justice to another amia-

ble and interesting girl, that I know; how would my respect for her redouble. My gratitude and affection would then know no bounds! but I must now advert to my own affairs, for I know you are anxious about all that concerns me.

As soon as our first salutations were over, my father, to my great joy, begun speaking of poor Emily, and expressed great displeasure at her unexpected removal from the castle. I have had high words with your mother, said he, this morning, on this important subject; but all I can yet obtain of her is a solemn assurance, that the dear girl is in safe and honourable hands, and not treated as an insane person. It is her fixed determination not to reveal where she is placed, until you are married, Caroline. She will then be no impediment to your establishment,

establishment, and I may then do as I please, your mother says, about introducing her into life. You see, my dear girl, added he, that your sister's fate is in your hands. I was mute with astonishment. He continued, I once greatly wished for an union between my Caroline, and Lord Ormond, but that is now impossible, as his Lordship is the declared lover of your sister, though as yet her very existence is unacknowledged by either of her parents. I felt a palsiness pass over my heart as my father said, an union with Lord Ormond was impossible. It seemed passing sentence on me. Ah! he knew not the sad heart he was condemning to lasting sorrow. I have this day, continued he, received a letter from your admirer, Henry Pemberton, now become Marquis of Barford, by the death of his brother. He offers a *carte blanche* for settle-

ments, and I am persuaded is sufficiently in love with you, to overlook the reduction of your fortune, provided you will smile upon his suit—what says my girl? you know I begged leave to decline listening to a former offer from this ardent lover on account of the smallness of his fortune, being only a younger brother; that objection is now done away, his Lordship's estate is large, and unincumbered, his person and manners are elegant; he is allowed to possess a good understanding, and his rank and connexions are unexceptionable, your mother highly approves of him. But you are silent, Caroline, is it the silence of approbation, or disgust? Oh! Sir, replied I, that is a very sudden question, I am not at all prepared for it. Besides, do not you think as you once refused his Lordship on the score of small fortune, that he has a

right

right to retaliate, and is it not more than likely that he will? do you wish he should, Caroline, said my father, or is it only a fear that he might? indeed, if I must be candid I would rather he would, replied I. And let your sister remain in obscurity? said my father, I thought you seemed warmly interested in her happy release. And so I am, my dear father; but is there no way of setting her free, but by making me a slave? You give marriage a very harsh name, Caroline, replied he, but I will not press you farther on the subject at present. I must answer Lord Barford's letter in three days. I give you that time for consideration, and shall expect your final answer by Sunday. We will now talk of something else; and here he changed the subject, and we talked of indifferent things, while we staid together, which was not long; for I wished to

be alone, that I might reflect without interruption, upon the important proposal my father had made me; but alas! I have been thinking till my head aches; my heart ached when I began, and all to no purpose: I cannot determine what is best for me to do. With all my boasted generosity, I am but a poor selfish creature at last. I fancied I could make any sacrifice to restore my sister to the blessings she is deprived of; but behold the first that is required of me, I hesitate, and feel myself incapable of accomplishing. I know that I must relinquish all hopes of Lord Ormond's regard—I know he prefers my sister—that she repays his affection with an equal tenderness—ah! who that was loved by Lord Ormond could forbear to do so?—I know too, that they are equally unhappy—that they love without hope, while my sister's

freedom

freedom is denied her. I am told that their fate is in my hands; that I have the power to make them both happy, and shall I refuse to do so, because I must be the victim? Has not my lovely sister suffered all her persecution on my account? Indeed Louisa, I can see no way out of the labyrinth, but by my marriage with Lord Barford—and yet, another consideration withholds me there—is it justice to the man who loves me so sincerely, to bestow upon him my hand, while my heart is another's? Would he still wish to espouse me, if he knew my affections were already engaged? it is true that I must endeavour to conquer my unhappy partiality—must endeavour to forget the amiable object of it—but can I be certain that Lord Barford would be my choice, was I unprejudiced by a predelection for another? In short, I am bewildered by

my own reasonings, I know not what to do. Pray for me, my dear Louisa, that I may be directed to do that which is best, and may, however wretched my fate, still continue worthy of the affection with which you have always regarded,

Your faithfully attached,

CAROLINE.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

Mrs. Dudly to Mr. Simson.

I AM obliged to write to you, good Mr. Simson, as I have particular reasons for not having a private conference with you just now. My son is arrived from Ireland, and poor deluded youth, is in a sad way. Never was infatuation equal to his, for this lowborn girl—I have no patience with it—he has been asking me fifty questions in a breath, about his aunt's death—and her will—and nobody knows what. I really think if he had not been too distracted to notice me, I should have betrayed myself; for I declare he asked such unexpected questions,

that I was hardly prepared with an answer; and now do you know, Mr. Simson, that he has taken the mad scheme in his head, of giving this Louisa the estate in Berkshire, worth above five hnndred per annum. He says, he recollects that his aunt had left it to her, in a former will, and that he thinks it the height of injustice, and an affront to his uncle's memory, to let her remain unprovided for. I pleaded her inconstancy to himself. He said that was nothing; if she had inherited the whole of the estates his aunt died possessed of, he should not have thought her bound to marry him, unless she liked it. Marry him indeed! I should be sorry if I thought there was a chance of that—but poor fellow, he is quite in fool's paradise now, to be sure. I told him I was sure she would neither see him, nor accept any thing from him, for that she had

treated me with the most unbecoming hauteur, and declined my offered services with contempt. He said that sho ld not prevent his doing what he thought e ought to do; he should therefore order his attorney to wait upon Miss Lenox with the deeds, &c. belonging to the estates, and a proper deed of conveyance to insure her possession of it. I said I was sure Mr. Simson would execute whatever he wished with precision, and dispatch; he said, he would send for you to-morrow morning, and give you the necessary directions. You must therefore not acknowledge having had any hint of the business from me, on any account whatever. My reason for writing to you is, to request you would so manage this affair that my son may keep the estate. You know you can offer it to the girl in such a manner that she cannot accept it,

consistently with honour; her notions on that head are romantically nice. It is easy to insinuate that young men have generally some sinister view, when they offer money to handsome young women. But I leave the management of the whole to yourself; I know you are capable of doing it in a proper manner, and I rely upon your fidelity in the execution.

I am, in the mean time,

Good Mr. Simson, your's,

P. DUDLY.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

Mr. Simson to Mrs. Dudly.

MY GOOD LADY,

I JUST now received the honour of your note, in which there is a small oversight, I am sure it proceeded from want of thought; but in these matters there are certain formalities that cannot be dispensed with—I dare say, my good lady, you understand me; when a man sacrifices his peace of mind to oblige his friend, he expects some little remuneration for so doing. You know, Madam, I was extremely reluctant to undertake any part of this business, and I am sure

sure, though you are pleased to say, out of politeness, that I am capable of performing what you wish in a proper manner, I have no such opinion of myself; I am quite a novice at these things. I have never been used to any thing but fair open dealing, until you entreated me to lend my assistance in saving your son from distruction. But my good lady, you cannot think how I have suffered with my tender conscience ever since. Indeed, Madam, you never will be able to make me amends for what I have undergone to serve you; and now in this case, I assure you, I have many scruples. If the young people like each other, it seems cruel to part them; and besides, I have every reason to think they would reward me nobly if I was to forward, instead of prevent the match. Your son is a noble minded young gentleman, I

dare

dare say he would not forget to tell me what I might expect for serving him, if he required me to run any risk for his sake. I dare say it was an oversight in you, my good lady, but you know I must not be so hasty. You should not leave any possibility of my being tempted to betray you, for you know a single secret in my possession would set all right between the lovers. I am persuaded, Madam, you will understand what I mean, and suffer me still to subscribe myself, my good lady,

Your obedient humble servant,

PETER SIMSON.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

To Peter Simson, Esq.

MR. SIMSON, though I did omit telling you what I meant to give you for the service I require, you need not have been so much afraid to trust me; I should certainly have rewarded you. You may recollect that I have done so already, for what you did before. However, to satisfy all your scruples, you may draw up a bond for £.1,000 and I will sign it, to be paid when the estate is refused by Louisa; will that content? I am afraid you are rather mercenary—but, however, you will find a good friend in,

P. DUDLY.

LETTER XXII.

To Mrs. Dudly.

MADAM,

I THANK you for the promise of the bond, though it is no more than my due; and not above half what I might expect from your son, for the discovery of all I know. I beg, Madam, in future, you will observe that I am not mercenary, since I serve you for less than I might have else where. You say I might have trusted you for a reward—but alas! Madam, in these sort of transactions that will not bear examination, it is always best to stipulate beforehand; for when favours are granted, it

is

is sometimes difficult to obtain their reward. I shall wait upon you to execute the bond, after I have been with your son, from whom I have just received a note to attend him to-morrow morning by nine o'clock. I dare say, there will always be a mutual good understanding between us, and then you need not doubt the fidelity of,

Madam,

Your humble servant,

PETER SIMSON.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

Lousia to Lady Caroline Egerton.

I KNOW what the sting of a scorpion is—I have received my death wound from one this morning—the venom has sunk into my heart, and not even the healing powers of friendship can extract it. Oh! my dear Lady Caroline, your poor friend is sunk to the lowest ebb of humiliation. When I reflect upon the offer which was made me this morning, I am surprised at my own existence. Good heavens! how was it possible I could survive so cruel an insult? But I am playing with your feelings, I will endeavour to be explicit, though I fear

fear there is no ink black enough to describe the hateful scene. I was sitting at work with my dear Mrs. Mordant after breakfast, and I do not know how it was, but I had chatted myself into better spirits than I have felt since the death of my lamented friend, Mrs. Lenox. A ring at the bell made me lift my head from my work, and seeing a strange gentleman on horseback at the gates, I told Mrs. Mordant I would retire to my own room, till he was gone. She indulged me, and before the servant had opened the gate, I was up at my window, from whence I perceived that the supposed stranger was Mr. Simson, Mrs. Dudly's attorney. A cold tremor seized me, as soon as I recognized his features, and I was hardly able to obey the summons brought me by the servant, to attend him in the parlour. My heart forboded no good—

but

but it was not sufficiently depraved to guess his diabolical mission. At my entrance into the parlour, he approached me with that fawning civility that overstrained politeness, upon which he piques himself, and which has but too well recommended him to his employers. His countenance is expressive of low cunning and self-sufficiency, and when he means to be very obsequeous, he smiles—but it is the smile of suppressed insolence—of well guarded hypocrisy. I cut short a fine compliment he was making on my mended looks, by enquiring, abruptly, what his business was with me. My pretty young lady, said the sycophant, my business is entirely with yourself, and therefore, glancing his eye at Mrs. Mordant, I should wish to speak with you alone. I have nothing, Sir, replied I, that is a secret to that lady, and therefore I beg you will explain whatever

whatever you have to say to me, without reserve, in her presence. You may do as you like about acquainting that lady with it afterwards Miss, said Mr. Simson, but I shall not explain myself in the presence of a third person, you may depend upon it. Mrs. Mordant got up to go out of the room—I caught hold of her hand—do not leave me, dear Madam, said I, trembling like a fool. You need not apprehend any violence from me Miss, said the wicked fiend, I am the messenger of love, not hatred, I assure you. My dear, said Mrs. Mordant, I shall remain within call, so make yourself easy; you are alarmed without cause, I am sure; so saying she left the room, and Mr. Simson drawing his chair close to mine, pulled several parchments from his pocket, and presented them to me. These, Madam, said he, are the deeds of

the

the Ashfield estates in Berkshire, and which belonged to your late friend, Mrs. Lenox, which at her demise devolved, with the rest of her property, to Augustus Dudly, Esq. her heir at law. Well Sir, interrupted I, what are these deeds to me? I am commissioned Miss, to present them to you, together with this deed of conveyance, by which the estate becomes your sole property. And pray Sir, said I, by whom was this commission given you? By Mr. Dudly himself, Miss, who in spite of every thing, is still your passionate admirer. He desired me to offer the estate to your acceptance, the nett rent is about five hundred per annum—a very noble settlement, very noble indeed, in my poor opinion. You astonish me Sir, replied I, what can Mr. Dudly mean by this offer—I confess I am at a loss to account for this noble settle-

ment,

ment, as you call it; after Mr. Dudly's recent slighting behaviour, I did not expect such an effort of generosity. Why I will tell you what Miss, said the wretch, you seem to toss your head up, and to sneer at the princely offer that is made you, but believe me it is ten to one if ever you get so fine a one again. Pray Sir, said I, trembling all over with indignation, be so kind as to explain the nature of this great favour; upon what terms am I to accept Mr. Dudly's generosity; has this gift his mother's approbation? Why now, my dear Miss, you are rather too hard upon me. I did not ask the young gentleman what he expected in return for his goodnature; but I suppose according to the general rule in those kind of affairs, that a handsome young lady could not well mistake a young gentleman's meaning, where he offered her

money,

money, without offering her marriage; and I really did not imagine it was likely he would ask his mamma's leave to make a settlement upon a mistress, and therefore did not enquire; but here is a letter Miss, continued he, pulling one out of his pocket, and I suppose it will explain all the business. The wretch put it into my hand, I looked at the superscription, it was Augustus's writing. I did not deign to open it, but tearing it into pieces scattered them upon the floor; the agony of just resentment prevented me from speaking; I thought my poor heart would have burst; at length a flood of tears came to my relief, and I recovered my speech—Begone! said I, base pander, of a still baser employer—begone! and no longer pollute this innocent dwelling with your presence. And is there no answer to Mr. Dudly's letter, Miss?

You saw the use I made of it—relate that circumstance faithfully—it will be a sufficient answer, for there are no words that can do justice to the contempt which I feel, both for you and your employer! So saying, I hurried out of the room. At the door I met Mrs. Mordant; my dear child, said she, what has flurried you so? I could not speak, but pointing to the parlour, I raised my weeping eyes to heaven in an agony of silent grief. Has the vile man offended you, my love, said Mrs. Mordant. Yes, yes, said I, as soon as I could utter it, and flew immediately to my chamber. Mrs. Mordant, as she told me afterwards, sent her servant to Mr. Simson, to order him instantly to quit her house. He obeyed her as soon as he had collected his parchments together, and while he was doing so, the servant said he muttered something about

pride

pride and poverty. He carefully picked up every bit of the letter I had torn, and put them in his pocket; he then rode off, leaving the poor object of so much unprovoked cruelty and insult, as wretched as her bitterest enemy could wish her to be. When I related the particulars of my interview with the wicked Simson, to Mrs. Mordant, she could scarcely bridle her anger sufficiently to hear me out. Do not you pity me, my dear Lady Caroline—not only forsaken by the man I love, (for in spite of all I suffer, I cannot tear his image from my heart,) but insulted by his base offers of fortune, on the most degrading terms. Mean wretch! did he imagine that change of fortune had altered my principles? or that the delicacy he had so often said he admired me for, was no more than the short lived insect of the sunshine of prosperity.

No, no, the education given me by that best of women—the principles instilled by her precepts, and inforced by her example—are treasures beyond the reach of the utmost malice of fortune: my most cruel enemy has no power over my mind. Alas! what have I said, is not Augustus my most cruel enemy? and yet, even at this moment, when honour, delicacy, justice itself, call upon me to hate him, I feel a lurking tenderness, an habitual affection, that adds poignancy to the wounds his perfidy has inflicted. Was it not enough to see me hurled from the highest pinnacle of earthly felicity, to penury or dependence; but he must endeavour to sink me still lower—to degrade me to the level of the basest of my sex. When he saw me robbed of all that fortune could deprive me of, was it generous, was it humane, to attempt

to

to steal the only blessings left to solace me—my innocence, and the approbation of my own conscience? There was a time when I fondly believed Augustus esteemed me too much, to have conceived an injurious thought of me; but alas! that soothing dream is fled; he not only meanly leaves me in the moment of adversity, and prefers a richer bride to me, but lost to every sense of manly feeling—every dictate of honour and generosity—he insults the object of his former vows with offers of illicit love. Oh! that I had died with my beloved benefactress—had closed my eyes upon this world, before I had experienced its cruelty, or wept the fallacy of all its pleasing promises. My heart is broken—I am persuaded that the blow I have received this day will be fatal—do not regret my departure, my beloved Caroline, when

the silent grave receives me; but recollect my tortured spirit will then be set at liberty—my agonized heart will then cease to feel oppression.

I have received your last kind letter, and am too experienced in sorrow, not to sympathize in all your sufferings; when such distinguished worth as your's, my Caroline, blessed with all the advantages that birth and fortune can bestow, feels the keen arrow of misfortune rankling in your bosom—when your sad fate proves beyond a doubt, that virtue cannot insure, nor riches purchase, that visionary good called happiness—shall I, poor worm as I am, murmur at the decrees of fate when unhappy? Forbid it gratitude. I still enjoy some blessings, of which my amiable friend is deprived; though torn from the once dear object

object of my affections, I am not obliged by duty, or honour, to marry another; the sweets of retirement are within my reach; my obscure rank enables me to hide my sorrows in its gloom; no arbitrary rules of etiquette, can oblige me to wear the smile of joy, while my heart writhes with anguish. I know not how to advise you, my sweet friend; but I most sincerely pray, that some unlooked for, happy event, may release your injured sister, without your being sacrificed at the shrine of hymen, and wedded to a man your heart refuses to approve. Ah! my dear Lady Caroline, a few months back how happy were you and I; will those halcyon hours never return. Alas! to me they never can, but I still flatter myself, that your prospect will brighten, and the sun of joy once more shine upon you; nor am I yet be-

come so selfish by misfortune, but that the reflected rays of your felicity may impart a degree of warmth to the sad bosom of, my dear Caroline,

Your affectionate,

L. W.

LETTER

LETTER XXIV.

Sir Henry Paget to Lord Ormond.

FOR heaven sake, Ormond, what are you about? One would think you had taken a snug birth in the invisible world, and retired to it whenever this displeased you. I expected to find you in town, but I was disappointed; disappointments seem of late to belong almost exclusively to me. You pretended to be quite bored with Mountag-e, and his fine seat, called Francourt, and his cartoons, and his long histories, about what happened to him while he was abroad; and yet it seems you are

going there again. Pray have you found any pretty incognita in that neighbourhood to fall in love with? I suppose you do not care a pin about poor Lady Emily, now you know who she is. Apropos, I fancy there is some special information waiting for you, when you can find your way home to some of your ostensible habitations, from your romantic rambles; for I was told by your father's porter, that an old gentleman in black, which, by his description, I take to be Orme, had been enquiring for your rambling Lordship; but refused to leave his name, or his message, or any clue that would take the poor fellow's curiosity off the tenter hooks of uncertainty. I think I can give you a piece of intelligence that will speedily bring you to light, and make you quit your sly corner, at least for a few hours. Your old friend Harry

Paget,

Paget, infected by the military maniac of the times, has taken it into his wise head to go crusading, with a few more choice spirits like himself; and I suppose you will not refuse to take leave of him before he sets out. The plain English is this, I am going as a volunteer to serve in the secret expedition, now ready to march, whose destination nobody is to know, and yet every body surmises. To me, all places are alike at present. As Venus frowns upon me, I must pay my devoirs to Bellona, and though a less delicate, perhaps she may prove a kinder mistress. My offers of service I believe surprised the court party a little. The strong opposition I have shewn to all their measures throughout this disastrous war, has made my principles too well known to be mistaken; but perish the narrow heart, I say, that can think upon party feuds, when

the common enemy is to be attacked; the same love of my country that so early stamped me a patriot, and bid me use all the energy heaven had endowed me with, to stem the torrent of corruption, which has so long been threatening with destruction, that freedom so dear to our ancestors, whose charters they did not scruple to seal with their blood. The same love of my country, I say, induces me to draw the sword in her defence; and is any man so likely to distinguish himself in a military career, as he, to whom life is no longer an object of anxiety or pleasure? As you laughed at me most egregiously at the beginning of my captivity, and took ample vengeance on me, for the sin ple badinage with which I had formerly ridiculed your love at first sight, I hope you will now kindly forbear to strike a wounded man, and do me the

justice

justice to believe, that if I am serious in nothing else, I am at least seriously in love.

None without hope, e're lov'd the brightest fair,

says the poet; but not so say I, hope is extinguished in my breast while love remains unshaken at his port; and, vulture like, preys on my tortured heart; fearing your raillery, I have not mentioned the lovely Miss Lenox in any of my letters, since I left Northington Castle. You remember upon what score Mrs. Lenox declined my addresses for her *protegée*—an engagement to Mr. Dudly, her nephew. This was an unanswerable objection, and silenced me effectually. Shortly after her return home, Mrs. Lenox died, and, to the astonishment of all the world, left the charming Louisa unprovided for. Mrs. Dudly has treated

that

that angelic girl in the most cruel manner, obliging her to quit Lenox Abbey, and seek refuge with a Mrs. Mordant, a clergyman's widow, who by the bye, is a woman of good family, and was the most particular friend Mrs. Lenox ever had. She is a woman of sense and penetration too, for she always doated upon Louisa, like a mother. To add to Miss Lenox's mortification, that ungrateful hound, Augustus Dudly, blind newt as he is, relinquished what princes might contend for, and to please his mama, forsook the most lovely woman in the world, because fortune had forsaken her. Good heavens! is it possible that so insensible a being can exist, as to yield up, for any earthly consideration, the affection of Louisa Lenox; and yet, this animal, this Dudly, has done so; and for the sake of a few paltry thousand pounds; how I despise the fellow.

fellow. I hope I shall never meet the poor pitiful creature any where above the ground floor, for I shall certainly kick him down stairs; but I wander from the subject. The above intelligence came to me from a quarter that left no room to doubt its authenticity; and I must confess that at first I was selfish enough to rejoice at it, as it offered me so fair an excuse for renewing my addresses, and gave me an opportunity of proving the sincere and disinterested passion I feel for the most lovely of women. As soon therefore as I thought the first violence of her grief for Mrs. Lenox's death was over, I wrote to Mrs. Mordant, and entreated permission to wait upon Miss Lenox for a few minutes, upon business of the utmost importance to me. I received a polite answer from the good old lady, allowing of my visit, and the next day set off post for the priory, in B——shire.

B—— shire. I arrived at a little town, about a mile from the house, about four o'clock, and as I supposed that might be their dinner time, I determined to take mine at the inn, before I waited upon them. In the course of my enquiries concerning the distance from thence to the priory, my good hostess found an opportunity of praising the worthy mistress of that hospitable mansion. She had lived many years servant with Mrs. Mordant, whom she had quitted only a few months, on her marriage with the man who keeps the red lion. She found her present life very different, she said, from the regular, quiet, easy one, she had led with her good mistress, whom she painted as an angel of light; and if, said she, there is any body upon earth that is as good as Mrs. Mordant, it must be that sweet young lady that is with her. God bless her pretty face, I have known

known her ever since she was five years old, and she was always the same good creature she is now—and to be sure it is impossible to be more beautifuller than Miss Louisa; I do not know what to call her else now, for it seems she is not to be Miss Lenox any longer—they give her some outlandish name, that I shall never be able to think of. I know what I would do if I was her, I would get married to somebody or another, and have an English name of my own, without being beholden to any one. I think that would be an excellent plan, replied I, and I suppose the young lady, as she is so handsome, has plenty of suitors. Why I cannot tell that, Sir, said my hostess; when people loses their fortune, they generally loses their sweethearts too; and they do say as how, Miss Louisa has been forsaken by the young gentleman as she liked best, and that she

she takes it sadly to heart—to be sure he must be very wicked, to prove falsehearted for the lucre of a little gain, when he rolls in riches himself. Is Miss Louisa related to Mrs. Mordant? said I. Lord bless you, no, Sir, replied the good landlady; poor thing, she is related to no one creature in all the versal world, as she knows of. She was brought up by a Mrs. Lenox, a very good lady, and an intimate friend of Mrs. Mordant's, who always called her her daughter; but when Mrs. Lenox died, she left her nothing at all, instead of a great fortin, as every body expected; and so poor thing she was always very fond of my mistress, and she of her, and used to call her, her tother mother; and so my mistress asked her to come to live with her, and to be sure she is a treasure to any body, for she is so meek, and gentle, and so ingenious—never idle, always

always working, or drawing, or playing on the music—and then she is so charitable—she visits all the poor all round the neighbourhood, and so she always used, and when she was rich used to give them a great deal of money; but now she says as how she is poor herself, but she can still bestow something, if it is only kind words, and good advice; and Lord bless you, Sir, they be more gladder to see her, though she gives them nothing, than they would some proud folks if they gave them twenty pounds. When I used to go with my mistress to Lenox Abbey, I never used to hear nothing else but about Miss Louisa, from all the servants, and all the poor people; every body doated upon her; and they say, all the poor folkes cried when she came away, the same as if she had been their own child. I could have listened for ever to my communicative

hostess's

hostess's praises of the charming Louisa, but my dinner being ended, she removed the cloth, and finished her discourse, and I could hear her husband reprimand her at the door for chattering so to the gentleman. Lord bless you, replied she, I cannot help it for the soul of me, when any body talks to me about my mistress or Miss Louisa. I dispatched a servant with my compliments to Mrs. Mordant, and that I meant to wait upon her in half an hour. And when I had paid my respects to my toilet, and endeavoured to call up a look, I proceeded to the priory, and with a palpitating heart entered the drawing room, just as the enchanting Louisa was seated at the tea-table, to do the honours of it. I met with a polite reception from both the ladies, and Mrs. Mordant begged I would defer the mention of business, till I had refreshed myself with a dish

dish of tea. Accordingly we chatted upon indifferent subjects, while I feasted on nectar from the hand of Hebe, and for these few happy minutes did not envy the gods themselves; but short, and transient was my bliss; for as soon as tea was over, and the servant had retired, I entreated the honour of Miss Lenox's attention for a few minutes. She politely said, that as Mrs. Mordant was her best, and almost her only friend, she had no reserves with her, and therefore begged I would have the goodness to say whatever I wished, in her presence. I told Miss Lenox, that as my intentions were too honourable to need disguise, I could have no objection to the presence of her worthy friend—nay, added I, perhaps I may gain an advocate to plead my cause. I then expatiated on the sincerity of my affection for Miss Lenox, which not even

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the positive refusal I had received on my first declaration, had been able to extinguish that understanding—and hearing that some alterations had taken place, which had freed her from her former engagements, my hopes revived, and had induced me to take the earliest opportunity of laying my fortune at her feet; that ample as it was, she alone had power to make it valuable to me, and if she refused to share it with me, felicity could never be mine. I offered a *carte blanche* for settlements, and to empower my agent to give satisfaction relative to my estates, to any body she might choose to appoint to investigate the matter. All that I entreated in the mean time was, to be permitted to hope—if an unshaken constancy, an ardent affection, the most disinterested passion, have any merit in your eyes, do not, most lovely of women, despise

spise the man who now supplicates your compassion. Miss Lenox listened to me without interruption, till I had done speaking; she then said, do you know Sir Henry, that the person you honour with your addresses, is left destitute of fortune—an outcast from the sphere of life in which you first saw her move; and but for this one kind friend, taking Mrs. Mordant's hand, a deserted orphan, friendless, and forlorn! tears filled her beautiful eyes as she said this. I know, Madam, said I, rising from my seat and advancing towards her with redoubled respect—I know that fortune has done you great injustice—but that you can be friendless, is what I can never believe, while my soul does homage to the worth of the most amiable and lovely of women. That you have no fortune, is my strongest inducement to offer you mine; and I shall consider myself

self the most fortunate of men, if by deigning to accept it, you make me the happy instrument of restoring you to that elevated rank you are born to adorn. Miss Lenox lifted her eyes to heaven, and clasping her hands together, exclaimed, with emotion, good God! suffer not weak vanity to tempt me to make an unjust return to such unparalleled generosity. If you could know, Sir, continued she, turning to me, the cruel insult I received this morning—the painful humiliations that daily pursue me, you would excuse the momentary impulses of an oppressed heart, which had almost led me to accept your noble offers. Yes, Sir, as I listened to your generous proposals, weakened and harrassed as my mind is by continual suffering, dazzled by their greatness, I could not help thinking of the mortification I should inflict, of the surprise I should

create,

create, by accepting them; and emerging at once from the dark abyss of oblivion and contempt, into the regions of fashion and splendour—but thank heaven, my soul has recovered its wonted energy, and soars above so mean a triumph, purchased at the expence of my integrity. Accept, therefore, generous Sir, my heartfelt gratitude, for the undeserved distinction you have honoured me with; and be assured that I never shall lose the sense of your goodness, while life and sense are mine. But far be it from me to accept an obligation I can never repay; my heart is a bankrupt in affection, and would be a poor cold return for such an one as your's. Suffer me then, Sir, at the same time that I thank you for your generous offers, entirely to decline them. Say not so—too lovely Miss Lenox, interrupted I—pronounce not my irrevocable doom so

hastily, suffer me at least to hope, that time and my assiduity may conquer your present objections. No, Sir, replied she, hope nothing from time—my affections have been once bestowed—I have found the object unworthy to possess them it is true; but I cannot transfer them to another, however amiable; I can break my heart, but cannot alter it. If my warm gratitude—my high esteem—my best wishes—are worth your acceptance, they are unreservedly your's; but I have no more to bestow; I will never give my hand where my heart cannot follow. It was in vain that I endeavoured to combat these resolutions with all the rhetoric I was master of. Mrs. Mordant joined me, and pleaded for me with a warmth that charmed me. All we asked was permission to hope; but she was inexorable, and your poor friend was forced to take his leave, with

his

his brain turned topsyturvy, and his heart as heavy as a cannon ball. At my departure, those very lips that had just been dooming me to hopeless wretchedness, breathed soft wishes for my future health and happiness. Oh! what inconsistent creatures are women! if my mother had not been one, I should try to hate the whole sex; and yet, I believe I might as well save myself that trouble, as the effort would be fruitless, for the very resolutions that have caused my misery, have encreased my esteem and admiration, for the fair but cruel girl that made them. When I returned to town I met with Percival, and he was so full of the expedition that is going to Holland, that I caught the infection, and determined to join the royal standard. It struck me, that there could not be a more effectual remedy for hopeless love, than a bullet well applied,

applied. I have therefore changed the myrtle, for the laurel. If you cannot be in town before the 19th, meet me at Canterbury the 20th, and receive the friendly adieus of,

Your faithful,

H. PAGET.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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